



HUMAN NATÜRE

IN ITS

FOUR-FOLD STATE,

OF

Primitive Integrity, entire Depravity, begun Recovery, and Confummate Happiness or Misery;

SUBSISTING IN

The Parents of Mankind in Para, the Unregenerate, the Regenerate, and all Manking in the Future State.

IN SEVERAL

PRACTICAL DISCOURSES.

By the Reverend and Learned
Mr. THOMAS BOSTON,
Late Minister of the Gospel at ETTRICK.

John ii. 24, 25. But Jesus did not commit bimself unto them, because he knew all men; and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man.

Luke ix. 55. Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

Prov. xxvii. 19. As in water face answereth to face: so the heart of man to man.

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PREFACE.

T is a maxim among wife men, that the knowledge of persons is of as great use in the conduct of human life, as the knowledge of things: and it is most certain; that he who knows the various tempers, humours, and dispositions of men, who can find out their turn of thought, and penetrate into the secret springs and principles of their actings, will not be at a loss to find out proper means for compassing his aims, will easily preserve himself from shares, and either avoid or overcome difficulties. But the knowledge of human nature, morally considered, or, in other words, of the temper and disposition of the soul, in its moral powers, is of much greater value; as it is of use in the concerns of an unchangeable life and world: he who is possessed of so valuable a branch of knowledge, is thereby capacitated to judge aright of himself, to understand true Christianity, and to conceive justly of

perfect happiness and consummate misery.

The depravity of human nature is to plainly taught, yea, inculcated in facred Scripture, and is so obvious to every thinking man's observation, who searches his own breast, and restects duly on his temper and actings, that it is furprifingly strange and wonderful, how it comes to pass, that this important truth is so little understood; yea, so much disbelieved by men, who bear the name of Gospel Ministers. Are there not persons to be found in a neighbouring nation, in the characters of preachers, appearing daily in pulpits, who are so unacquainted with their Bibles and themselves, that they ridicule the doctrine or original fin, as unintelligible jargon? If they are persons of a moral life and conversation, they feem to imagine that they cannot become better than they are: if they are immoral, they feem to indulge a conceit that they can become virtuous, yea, religious, when they please. These are the men who talk of the dignity of human nature, of greatness of mind, nobleness of soul, and generosity of spirit: as though they intended to perfutate themselves and others, that pride is a good principle; and do not know that pride and felfishness are the bane of mankind, productive of all the wickedness, and much of the mifery, to be found in this and the other world; and is indeed that wherein the depravity of human nature properly confifts.

Upright Adam's nature faintly adumbrated the Divine, in a moderated felf-efteem, an adequate felf-love, and delightful reflection on his own borrowed excellency, regulated by a just efteem of, and fupreme love to, his adorable Creator: whence a peaceful ferenity of mind, a loving, compatitionate, and benevolent disposition of foul, a depth of thought, and brightness of imagination, delightfully employed in the rapturous contemplation of his beloved Maker's infinite perfections: thus bearing the Divine image, and

refembling God that made him. But no fooner did he disobey the divine probatory command, than the scales were cast, his moderated self-esteem degenerated into pride, his adequate self-love shrunk into mere selfishness, and his delightful reslections on his own excellency, varied into the tickling pleasures of vanity and conceit; he lost view of the author of his being, and thenceforth, instead of delighting in him, first dreaded, and then despised him.

The modest, and therefore hitherto anonymous Author of the following discourses, Mr. Thomas Boston, having handled this subject, in preaching to his own obscure parochial congregation of Ettrick, in the Sheristdom of Seikirk, had a particular view to their benefit, in printing and publishing them; and therefore the stille and method is plain and simple, and the first edition printed on coarse paper; but the subject is so comprehensive and important, so well managed, and the book has been so well received, that it now appears in the world more embellished, as well as better

corrected, than formerly.

Let it suffice to recommend it to those who have a right taste of genuine Christianity, that all the Author's notions flow so directly from the facred Fountain, that it is to be doubted if he has had much recourse to any other helps than his Bible and his God for assistance. In the mean time, I am aware of an exception, from those who rank themselves among the polite part of mankind, that there is the same harsh peculiarity of dialect in it, which is commonly found in books of practical divinity. But I beg leave to observe, that the dialect which they except against, is borrowed from facred Scripture: and as it has pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to fave them that believe, fo also to countenance what they are displeased with, by the operations of his Spirit, on the minds of true Christians, as their common experience witnesseth. However, I heartily wish, that the exception were altogether removed, by some persons digesting into a methodical Treatist, the views of human nature in its primitive perfection, in its depraved condition, and its retrieved state, who is master of modern itile, and thoroughly understands the subjects discoursed in thisbook, that, by becoming all things to all men, fome, viz. of all ranks and kinds of men, may be gained.

I am not to declaim at large in favour of religion; this were to write a book by way of preface. Many able pens have been employed in recommending it to the world, by strong arguments drawn from its usefulness to society, its suitableness to the dignity of the Divine nature, and the advantages arising to men from it, in this and the other world. But, after all, may not one be left to doubt, if religion be rightly understood by all its patrons? May not the beauties and excellencies of a precious gem be elegantly described by a naturalist or jeweller, who never saw the particular one he talked of, and knows little of its nature, less of the construction of irs patts, and nothing or its proper use? Are there not men of bright parts, who reason excellently in defence of religion, and yet are so much strangers to it, that they brand the persons, who are so happy as to be possessed in, with the hard name of spiritu-

ahifts, reckoning them a kind of enthusiasts, unworthy of their regard. The truth is, Christianity is a mystery; mere reason does not comprehend it. There is a spiritual discerning necessary, to its being rightly understood, whence it comes to pais, that men of great learning and abilities, though they read the Scriptures with attention, and comment learnedly upon them, yet do not, yea, cannot, enter into the vein of thought peculiar to the inspired penmen, because they share not of the same Spirit; therefore it is, that the apostle Paul asserts, that the natural, or the unregenerate man, doth not know the things of God, neither indeed is capable of knowing them, because they are spiritually discerned.

of knowing them, because they are spiritually discerned.

From what has been said, it is easy to conclude, that no pedantic apology, on the part of the Author, for appearing in print, or fawning compliments to the courteous reader, on the part of the Prefacer, are to be expected. The truth is, both the one and the other, are rather little arts, vailing pedantry and conceit, than evidences of modesty and good sense. It is of more use to recommend the perusal of the book to persons of all ranks and degrees, from a few suitable copies, and to show wherein this edition differs from, and

excels the first.

That all mankind, however differenced by their rank and station in the world, have an equal concern in what is revealed concerning another and suture world, will be readily owned; and it must be as readily granted, that however allowable it may be, for men of learning and parts, to please themselves with sineness of language, justness of thought, and exact connection in writing, upon other subjects, yet they ought not to indulge themselves in the same taste in discourses on divine things, lest they expose themselves to the just consure of acting with the same indiscretion, as a person in danger of samishing by hunger would be guilty of, if he perversely rejected plain wholesome food, when offered to him, for no other reason than the want of palatable sauce, or order

iplendour in ferving it up.

The facred Book, which we call the Bible, has a peculiar fublimity in its vailed and unufual dialect and feeming inconnection; but is not therefore to be rejected, by men who bear the name of Christians, as uncouth or unintelligible: true wisdom dictates quite another thing; it counsels us, by frequent reading, to acquaint ourselves with it, become accustomed to its peculiar phrases, and fearch into its sublimities: upon this ground, that the matters contained in it are of the utmost consequence to us, and, when rightly understood, yield a refined delight, much superior to what is to be found in reading the best written books on the most entertaining subject. What pleads for the parent is a plea for the progeny; practical discourses upon divine subjects are the genuine offspring of the facred text, and ought therefore to be read carefully, and with attention, by persons of all ranks and degrees, though they are indeed calculated for, and particularly adapted to, fuch as move in low spheres of life.

Let it, however, be a prevailing argument, with persons of all denominations, carefully to read books of practical divinity, that

many of them are not written on the same motives and principles as other books are; the authors have often a peculiar divine call to publish them, and well-founded hope of their being useful. to advance Christianity in the world. In consequence whereof it is, that great numbers have reaped benefit by reading them, especially in childhood and youth; many have been converted by them; and it may be questioned, if ever there was a true Christian, since the art of printing made these books common, who has not in, some stage of life reaped considerable advantage from them. This, book recommends ittelf in a particular manner, by its being a fliort fubstantial system of practical divinity, infomuch that it may with truth be afferted, That a person who is thoroughly acquainted with all that is here taught, may, without danger to. his eternal interest, remain ignorant of other things which pertain to the science called Divinity. It is therefore earnestly recommended to the serious and frequent perusal of all, but especially of such as are in the stage of life called youth, and are so stationed in the world, as not to have frequent opportunities to hear fermons, and read commentaries on the facred text.

It is doubtless incumbent on masters of families, to make some provision of spiritual as well as bodily food for their children and servants: this is effectually done by putting practical books into their hands: and therefore this book is humbly and earnessly recommended as a family-book, which all the members of it are

not only allowed, but defired to perufe.

As to the difference between this and the first edition, which gives it preference, it lies chiefly in the Author's not only having revised the stile, but the thoughts in many places, and corrected. both, so as to set several important truths in a clearer light, and make the stile of the book now uniform, which formerly was not fo, because of the explications of peculiar words and phrases in use amongst practical divines, especially of the church of Scotland, which were interspersed throughout the first edition, and introduced by another hand; for the fake of such persons as are not accustomed to them. It remains that the Prefacer not only subjoin his name, which was concealed in the first edition, as a testimony that he esteems the Author, and values the book, but that he may thereby recommend it in a particular manner to the perufal of perfons of his own acquaintance. If, in his affilting towards its being published, and in prefacing both editions, he has not run unfent, he has what will bear him up under all cenfures. The charitable will think no evil, and others will do as they pleafe.

ROBERT WIGHTMAN, M. D. G. E.

Edinburgh, March 18, 1729. The Rev. Mr. HERVEY's Recommendation of this Work, in the first Volume of his Dialogues.

"SEE this Work of grace, and procedure of conversion, more copiously displayed, in a valuable piece, entitled, Human Nature in its Four-fold State, by Mr. Boston, which, in my opinion, is one of our best books for common readers. The sentences are short, and the comparisons striking: the language is easy, and the doctivine evangelical: the method proper, the plan compresions, the manner searching, yet consolatory. If another celebrated treatise is stilled, The whole Duty of Man; I would call this, The whole of Man; as it comprises—what he was, originally:—what he is, by transfergression:—what he should be, through grace:—and then what he will be, in glory."

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STATE I.

NAMELY,

The STATE of Innocence, or Primitive Integrity, in which Man was created.

Eccles. vii. 29.

Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright: but they have fought out many inventions.

by all who would fee heaven; 1st, What many was in the state of innocence, as God made him. 2dly, What he is in the state of corrupt nature, as he hath unmade himself. 3dly, What he must be in the state of grace, as created in Christ Jesus unto good works, if ever he be made a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. And, lastly, What he will be in his eternal state, as made by the Judge of all, either perfectly happy, or compleatly miterable, and that for ever. These are weighty points, that touch the vitals of practical godliness, from which most men, and even many professors, in these dregs of time, are quite estranged. I design, therefore, under the divine conduct, to open these things, and apply them.

I begin with the first of them, namely, the state of innocence: that beholding man, polished after the similitude of a palace, the ruins may the more affect us; we may the more prize that matchless Person, who n the Father has appointed the repairer of the breach; and that we may, with fixed resolves, betake curselves.

to that way which leadeth to the city that hath unmoveable foundations.

In the text we have three things;

1. The state of innocence wherein man was created. God hath made man upright. By man here we are to understand our first parents; the archetypal pair, the root of mankind, the compendized world, and the fountain from whence all generations have streamed; as may appear by comparing Gen. v. 1, 2. "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him, male and female created he them, and blessed them, (as the root of mankind) and called their name Adam." The original word is the same in our text. In this fense, man was made right (agreeably to the nature of God, whose work is perfect), without any imperfection, corruption, or principle of corruption, in his body or foul. He was made upright, that is, straight with the will and law of God, without any irregularity in his foul. By the let it got in its creation, it directly pointed towards God, as his chief end; which straight inclination was represented, as an emblem, by the erect figure of his body, a figure that no other living creature partakes of. What David was in a gospel sense, that was he in a legal fense; one according to God's own heart, altogether righteous, pure and holy. God made him thus. He did not first make him, and then make him righteous: but in the very making of him, he made him righteous. Original righteoutness was concreated with him; so that in the same moment he was a man, he was a righteous man, morally good; with the same breath that God breathed in him a living foul, he breathed in him a rightcous foul.

2. Here is man's fallen state; but they have fought ent many inventions. They fell off from their rest in God, and fell upon seeking inventions of their own, to mend their case; and they quite marred it. Their ruin was from their own proper motion; they would not abide as God had made them; but they sought out inventions, to deform and undo themselves.

3. Observe here the certainty and importance of these things, Lo, this only have I found, &c. Believe them;

they are the refult of a narrow fearch, and a ferious inquiry, performed by the wifest of men. In the two preceding verses, Solomon represents himself as in quest of goodness in the world: but the issue of it was, he could find no fatisfying issue of his search after it; though it was not for want of pains; for he counted one by one to find out the account. Behold, this have I found, faith the preacher—to wit, That (as the same word is read in our text) yet my foul feeketh, but I find not. He could make no fatisfying discovery of it, which might stay his inquiry. He found good men very rare, one, as it were among a thousand; good women more rare, not one good among his thousand wives and concubines, Kings xi. 3. But could that fatisfy the grand query, Where shall wisdom be found? No, it could not: (and if the experience of others in this point run counter to Solomon's, as it is no reflection on his difcernment, it can as little decide the question, which will remain undetermined till the last day.) But amidst all this uncertainty, there is one point found out, and fixed: This bave I found. Ye may depend upon it as a most certain truth, and he fully fatisfied in it: Lo, this; fix your eyes upon it, as a matter worthy of most deep and ferious regard; viz. That man's nature is now depraved; but that depravity was not from God, for he made man upright; but from themselves, they have sought out many inventions.

Doctrine, God made man altogether righteous.

This is that state of innocence in which God placed man in the world. It is described in the holy Scriptures with a running pen, in comparison of the sollowing states; for it was of no continuance, but passed as a flying shadow, by man's abusing the freedom of his will. I shall,

I. Enquire into the righteousness of this state wherein man was created.

II. Lay before you some of the happy concomitants and consequences thereof.

Lastly, Apply the whole.

Of Man's Original Righteousness.

First, As to the righteousness of this state, confider, that as uncreated righteoufnefs, the righteoufnefs of God, is the supreme rule, so all created righteousness, whether of men or angels, hath respect to a law as its rule, and is a conformity thereto. A creature can no more be morally independent of God, in its actions and powers, than it can be naturally independent of him. A creature, as a creature, must acknowledge the Creator's will as its supreme law; for as it cannot be without him, so it must not be but for him, and according to his will: yet no law obliges, until it be revealed. And hence it follows, that there was a law which man, as a rational creature, was subjected to in his creation; and that this law was revealed to him. God made man upright, fays the text. This supposeth al w, to which he was conformed in his creation; as when any thing is made regular, or according to rule, of necessity the rule itself is presupposed. Whence we may gather, that this law was no other than the eternal, indifpensible law of righteousness, observed in all points by the Second Adam; opposed by the carnal mind; some notions of which remain yet among the Pagans, w 10. having not the law, are a law unto themselves, Rom. ii. 15. In a word, this law is the very fame which was afterwards fummed up in the ten commandments, an I promulgated on mount Sinai to the Ifraelites; called by us the Moral Law; and man's righteousness confifted in conformity to this law or rule. More particularly, there is a two-fold conformity required of man; a conformity of the powers of his foul to the law, which you may call habitual righteoufnels; and a conformity of all his actions to it, which is actual righteousness. Now God made man habitually righteous; man was to make himself actually righteous: the former was the stock which God put into his hand; the latter was the improvement that he should have made of it. The sum of what I have faid is, that the righteoufness wherein man was created, was the conformity of all the faculties and powers of his foul to the moral law. This is what

we call Original Righteoufnefs, which man was originally endowed with. We may take it up in these three things.

First, Man's understanding was a lamp of light. He had perfect knowledge of the law, and of his duty accordingly: he was made after God's image, and confequently could not want knowledge, which is a part thereof, Col. iii. 10. The new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. And indeed this was necessary, to fit him for universal obedience; feeing no obedience can be according to the law, unless it proceed from a sense of the commandment of God requiring it. It is true, Adam had not the law written upon tables of stone; but it was written upon his mind, the knowledge thereof being concreated with him. God impressed it upon his foul, and made him a law to himfelf, as the remains of it among the Heathen do testify, Rom. ii. 14, 15. And feeing man was made to be the mouth of the creation, to glorify God in his works, we have ground to believe that he had naturally an exquifite knowledge of the works of God. We have a proof of this in Adam's giving names to the beafts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and those such as express their nature: What soever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof, Gen. ii. 19. The dominion which God gave them over the creatures, foberly to use and dispose of them according to his will (still in fubordination to the will of God) feems to require no less than a knowledge of their natures. And, besides all this, his perfect knowledge of the law proves his knowledge in the management of civil affairs, which, in respect of the law of God, a good man will guide with discretion, Pfal. cxii. 5.

Secondly, His will in all things agreeable with the will of God, Eph. iv. 24. There was no corruptions in his will, no bent nor inclination to evil; for that is fin, properly and truly fo called: Hence the apostle says, Rom. vii. 7. I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known suft, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. An inclination to evil is really a fountain of sin, and therefore inconsistent with that rectitude and uprightness which, the text expressly says, he was endued

with at his creation. The will of man then was directed, and naturally inclined, to God and goodness; though mutable. It was disposed, by its original make, to follow the Creator's will, as the shadow does the body; and was not left in an equal balance to good and evil: For, at that rate, he had not been upright, nor habitually conformed to the law; which in no moment can allow the creature not to be inclined towards God, as his chief end, more than it can allow man to be a god to himself. The law was impressed upon Adam's soul: Now this, according to the new covenant, by which the image of God is repaired, confifts in two things (1.) Putting the law into the mind; denoting the knowledge of it. (2.) Writing it in the heart; denoting inclinations in the will, answerable to the commands of the law, Heb. viii. 10. So that as the will, when we confider it as renewed by grace, is, by that grace, naturally inclined to the same holiness, in all its parts, which the law requires; fo was the will of man, when we confider him as God made him at first, endowed with natural inclinations to every thing commanded by the law. For if the regenerate are partakers of the divine nature, as undoubtedly they are; for fo fays the Scripture, 2 Pet. i. 4. and if this divine nature can import no less than inclinations of the heart to holiness: Then furely Adam's will could not want this inclination; for in him the image of God was perfect. It is true, it is said, Rom. ii. 13, 14. That the Gentiles-shew the work of the law written in their hearts: but it denotes only their knowledge of that law, fuch as it is; but the apostle to the Hebrews, in the text cited, takes the word heart in another fense, distinguishing it plainly from the mind. And it must be granted, that when God promiseth, in the new covenant, To write his law in the hearts of his people, it imports quite another thing than what Heathens have: for though they have notions of it in their minds, yet their hearts go another way; their will has got a fet and a bias quite contrary to that law: therefore the expression suitable to the present purpose must needs import, besides these notions of the mind, inclinations of the will going along therewith; which inclinations, though mixed with corruption in the regenerate, were pure and unmixed in upright Adam. In a word, as Adam knew his Master's pleasure, in the matter of duty, so his will stood incli-

ned to what he knew.

Thirdly, His affections were orderly, pure and holy, which is a necessary part of that uprightness wherein man was created. The apostle has a petition, 2 Thess. iii. 5. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God; that is, The Lord straighten your hearts, or make them lie straight to the love of God: and our text tells us that man was made thus straight. The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. Now this holiness, as it is distinguished from righteousness, may import the purity and orderliness of the affections. Thus the apostle, I Tim. ii. 8. will have men to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting: because, as troubled water is unfit to receive the image of the fun; so the heart, filled with impure and disorderly affections, is not fit for divine communications. Man's fensitive appetite was indeed naturally carried out towards objects grateful to the fenfes: for feeing man was made up of body and foul, and God made man to glorify and enjoy him; and, for this end, to use his good creatures in subordination to himself; it is plain, that man was naturally inclined both to ipiritual and sensible good; yet to spiritual, the chief good, as his ultimate end. Therefore his fensitive motions and inclinations were Subordinate to his reason and will, which lay straight with the will of God, and were not in the least contrary to the same. Otherwise he would have been made up of contradictions; his foul being naturally inclined to God, as the chief end, in the superior part thereof; and the same soul inclined to the creature as the chief end in the inferior part thereof, as they call it; which is impossible; for man, at the same instant, cannot have two chief ends. Man's affections, then, in his primitive state, were pure from all defilement, free from all disorder and distemper; because, in all their motions, they were duly subjected to his clear reaton, and his holy will. He had alto an executive power, answerable to his will; a power to do the good which he knew should be done, and which he was inclined to do; even to fulfil the whole law of God. If it had not been so, God would not have required of him perfect obedience; for to say that the Lord gathered where he had not strawed, is but the blasphemy of a wicked heart, against so good and bountiful a God, Mat. xxv. 24. 26.

From what has been faid, it may be gathered, that the original righteoufness explained was universal, and

natural, yet mutable.

First, it was universal; both with respect to the subject of it, the whole man: and the object of it, the whole law. Universal, I say, with respect to the subject of it, for this righteousness was diffused through the whole man: it was a bleffed leaven, that leavened the whole lump. There was not one wrong pin in the tabernacle of human nature, when God fet it up; however shattered it is now. Man was then holy in foul, body and spirit: while the foul remained untainted, its lodging was kept clean and undefiled; the members of the body were confecrated veffels, and inftruments of righteousness. A combat between fleth and spirit, reafon and appetite, nay the least inclination to fin, lust of the flesh in the inferior part of the foul, was utterly inconfiftent with this uprightness in which man was created; and has been invented to vail the corruption of man's nature, and to obscure the grace of God in Jefus Christ: it looks very much like the language of fallen Adam, laying his own fin at his Maker's door, Gen. iii. 12. The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. But as this righteousness was universal in respect of the subject, because it spread through the whole man, so also it was universal in refpect of the object, the holy law. There was nothing in the law but what was agreeable to his reason and will, as God made him; though fin hath now fet him at odds with it: his foul was shapen out, in length and breadth, to the commandment, though exceeding broad; fo that his original righteoutness was not only perfect in its parts, but in degrees.

Secondly, As it was universal, so it was natural to him, and not supernatural in that state. Not that it was effential to man as man: for then he could not have lost it, without the loss of his very being: But it was connatural to him. He was created with it: and it was necessary to the perfection of man, as he came out of the hand of God; necessary to his being placed in a

state of integrity. Yet,

Thirdly, It was mutable; it was a righteousness that might be loft, as is manifested by the doleful event. His will was not absolutely indifferent to good and evil: God fet it towards good only: yet he did not fo fix and confirm its inclinations, that it could not alter. No, it was moveable to evil: and that only by man himself, God having given him a fufficient power to stand in this integrity, if he had pleased. Let no man quarrel with God's work in this: for if Adam had been unchangeably righteous, he must have been so either by nature, or by free gift: by nature he could not be fo, for that is proper to God, and incommunicable to any creature; if by free gift, then no wrong was done to him, in withholding of what he could not crave. Confirmation in a righteous state is a reward of grace, given upon continuing righteous through the state of trial; and would have been given to Adam, if he had stood out the time appointed for probation by the Creator; and accordingly is given to the faints, upon account of the merit of Christ, who was obedient even to the death. And herein believers have the advantage of Adam, that they can never totally nor finally fall away from grace.

Thus was man made originally righteous, being created in God's own image, Gen. i. 27. which confifts in the positive qualities of knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. All that God made was very good, according to their several natures, Gen i. 31. And so was man morally good; being made after the image of him who is good and upright, Psal. xxv. 8. without this he could not have answered the great end of his creation, which was to know, love, and serve his God, according to his will. Nay, he could not be created otherwise: for he must

either be conformed to the law, in his powers, principles, and inclinations, or not: if he was, then he was righteous; and if not, he was a finner, which is abfurd and horrible to imagine.

Of Man's Original Happiness.

SECONDLY, I shall lay before you some of those things which did accompany or flow from the righteousness of man's primitive state. Happiness is the result of holiness; and as this was a holy, so it was a happy state.

First, Man was then a very glorious creature. We have reason to suppose, that as Moses's face shone when he came down from the mount; fo man had a very luminous and pleasant countenance, and beautiful body, while as yet there was no darkness of sin in him at all. But feeing God himself is glorious in holinefs, (Exod. xv. 11.) furely that spiritual comeliness which the Lord put upon man at his creation, made him a very glorious creature. O how did light shine in his glorious conversation, to the glory of the Creator! while every action was but the darting forth of a ray and beam of that glorious unmixed light which God had fet up in his foul: while that lamp of love, lighted from heaven, continued burning in his heart, as in the holy place; and the law of the Lord put in his inward parts, by the finger of God, was kept by him there, as in the most holy. There was no impurity to be feen without: no fquint look in the eves after any unclean thing; the tongue spoke nothing but the language of heaven: and; in a word, the King's Son was all glorious within, and his cloathing of wrought gold.

Secondly, He was the favourite of heaven; he shone brightly in the image of God; who cannot but love his own image wherever it appears. While he was alone in the world, he was not alone, for God was with him. His communion and fellowship was with his Creator, and that immediately: for as yet there was nothing to turn away the face of God from the work of his own hands; seeing sin had not as yet entered, which alone

could make the breach.

By the favour of God he was advanced to be confederate with heaven, in the first covenant, called, The Covenant of Works. God reduced the law, which he gave in his creation, into the form of a covenant, whereof perfect obedience was the condition: life was the thing promifed, and death the penalty. As for the condition, one great branch of the natural law was, That man believe whatfoever God shall reveal, and do whatfoever he shall command: accordingly, God making this covenant with man, extended his duty to the not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; and the law, thus extended, was the rule of man's covenant obedience. How easy were these terms to him, who had the natural law written on his heart, and that inclining him to obey this positive law, revealed to him, it feems, by an audible voice, (Gen. ii. 16.) the matter whereof was fo very easy? And indeed it was highly reasonable, that the rule and matter of his covenantobedience should be thus extended; that which was added being a thing in itself indifferent, where his obe dience was to turn upon the precise point of the will of God, the plainest evidence of true obedience: and it being in an external thing, wherein his obedience or disobedience would be most clear and conspicuous.

Now, upon this condition, God promised him life, the continuance of natural life, in the union of foul and body; and of spiritual life, in the favour of his Creator: he promised him also eternal life in heaven, to have been entered into, when he should have passed the time of his trial upon earth, and the Lord should see meet to transport him into the upper paradife. This promise of life was included in the threatening of death mentioned, Gen. ii. 17. For while God fays, In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die; it is, in effect, If thou do not eat of it, thou shalt surely live. And this was facramentally confirmed by another tree in the garden, called therefore the tree of life, which he was debarred from when he had finned, Gen. iii. 22, 23. Lest be put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden. Yet it is not to be

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thought, that man's life and death did hang only on this matter of the forbidden fruit, but on the whole law: for so says the apostle, Gal. iii. 10. It is written, Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them. That of the forbidden fruit was a revealed part of Adam's religion; and fo was necessary exprestly to be laid before him: but as to the natural law, he naturally knew death to be the wages of disobedience; for the very Heathens were not ignorant of this, Knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, Rom. i, 32. Moreover, the promise included in the threatening, secured Adam's life, according to the covenant, as long as he obeyed the natural law, with the addition of that positive command; so that he needed nothing to be expressed to him in the covenant, but what concerned the eating of the forbidden fruit. That eternal life in heaven was promifed in this covenant, is plain from this, that the threatening was of eternal death in hell; to which when man had made himself liable, Christ was promised, by his death, to purchase eternal life: and Christ himself expounds the promife of the covenant of works of eternal life, while he proposeth the condition of that covenant to a proud young man, who, though he had not Adam's stock, yet would needs enter into life in the way of working, as Adam was to have done under this covenant, Mat. xix. 17. If thou wilt enter into life, (viz. eternal life by doing, ver. 16.) keep the commandments.

The penalty was death, Gen. ii. 17. In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. The death that was threatened was such as the life promised was, and that most justly, to wit, temporal, spiritual, and eternal death. The event is a commentay on this: for that very day on which he did eat thereof, he was a dead man in law; but the execution was stopped, because of his posterity then in his loins; and another covenant was prepared: however, that day his body got its death-wound, and became mortal. Death also seized his soul: he lost his original righteousness, and the savour of God; witness the gripes and throes of

conscience, which made him hide himself from God. And he became liable to eternal death, which would have actually followed of course, if the Mediator had not been provided, who found him bound with the cords of death, as a malesactor ready to be led to execution. Thus you have a short description of the covenant, into which the Lord brought man in the state of innocence.

And feemeth it a finall thing unto you that earth was thus confederate with heaven? This could have been done to none but him, whom the King of heaven delighteth to honour. It is an act of grace, worthy of the gracious God, whose favourite he was; for there was grace, and free favour in the first covenant, though the exceeding riches of grace, as the apostle calls it, Eph. ii. 7. were reserved for the second. It was certainly an act of grace, favour, and admirable conde-feension in God, to enter into a covenant; and such a covenant with his own creature. Man was not at his own, but at God's disposal. Nor had he any thing to work with, but what he received from God. There was no proportion between the work and the promised reward. Before that covenant, man was bound to perfect obedience, in virtue of his natural dependence on God: and death was naturally the wages of fin; which the justice of God could and would have required, though there had never been any covenant between God and man: but God was free; man could never have required eternal life as the reward of his work, if there had not been such a covenant. God was free to have disposed of his creatures as he saw meet: if he had stood in his integrity to the end of time, and there had been no covenant promising eternal life to him upon his obedience, God might have withdrawn his supporting hand at last, and so made him creep back into the womb of nothing, whence almighty power had drawn him forth. 'And what wrong could there have been in this? for God would have only taken back what he freely gave; but now the covenant being made, God becomes debtor to his own faithfulness: if man will work, he may crave the reward on the ground of

the covenant. Well might the angels, then, upon his being raifed to this dignity, have given him this falutation, Hail thou that art highly favoured! the Lord is with thee.

Thirdly, God made him Lord of the world, prince of the inferior creatures, universal lord and emperor of the whole earth. His Creator gave him dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, over all the earth, yea, and every living thing that moveth on the earth: he put all things under his feet, Pfalm vii. 6, 7, 8. He gave him a power foberly to use and difpose of the creatures in the earth, sea, and air. Thus man was God's deputy governor in the lower world; and this his dominion was an image of God's fovereignty. This was common to the man and to the woman; but the man had one thing peculiar to him, to wit, that he had dominion over the woman alfo, 1 Cor. xi. 7. Behold how the creatures came unto him, to own their subjection, and to do him homage as their Lord! and quietly stood before him, till he put names on them as his own, Gen. ii. 19. man's face ftruck an awe upon them: the stoutest creature stood aftonished, tamely and quietly owning him as their lord and ruler. Thus man was crowned with glory and honour, Psal. viii. 5. The Lord dealt most liberally and bountifully with him, put all things under his feet: only he kept one thing, one tree in the garden out of his hands, even the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

But you may fay, And did he grudge him this? I answer, Nay? but when he had made him thus holy and happy, he graciously gave him this restriction, which was, in its own nature, a prop and stay to keep him from falling. And this I say, upon these three grounds. (1.) As it was most proper for the honour of God, who had made man lord of the lower world, to affert his sovereign dominion over all, by some particular visible sign; so it was most proper for man's safety. Man being set down in a beautiful paradise, it was an act of infinite wisdom, and of grace too, to keep from him one single tree, as a visible testimony

that he must hold all of his Creator, as his great landlord; that so, while he saw himself lord of the creatures, he might not forget that he was still God's subject. (2.) This was a memorial of his mutable state given in to him from heaven, to be laid up by him, for his greater caution. For man was created with a free-will to good, which the tree of life was an evidence of: but his will was also free to evil, and the forbidden tree was to him a memorial thereof. It was, in a manner, a continual watch-word to him against evil, a beacon set up before him, to bid him beware of dashing himself to pieces on the rock of sin. (3.) God made man upright, directed towards God as hischief end. He set him like Moses, on the top of the hill, holding up his hands to heaven: and as Aaron and Hur stayed up Moses's hands, (Exod xvii. 10, 11, 12.) fo God gave man an erect figure of body, and forbid him the eating of this tree; to keep him in that posture of uprightness wherein he was created. God made the beafts looking down towards the earth, to shew that their satisfaction might be brought from thence; and accordingly it does afford them what is commensurable to their appetite. But the erect figure of man's body, which looketh upward, shewed him, that his happiness lay above him, in God; and that he was to expect it from heaven, and not from earth. Now this fair tree, of which he was forbidden to eat, taught him the same lesson, that his happiness lay not in enjoyment of the creatures, for there was a want even in paradife: so that the forbidden tree was, in effect, the hand of all the creatures, pointing man away from themselves to God for happiness. It was a sign of emptiness hung before the door of the creation, with that inscription, This is not your rest.

Fourthly, As he had a perfect tranquillity within his own breast, so he had a perfect calm without. His heart had nothing to reproach him with; conscience then had nothing to do, but to direct, approve and feast him: and without there was nothing to annoy him. The happy pair lived in perfect amity; and though their knowledge was vast, true and clear, they knew no

shame. Though they were naked, there were no blushes in their faces; for sin, the seed of shame, was not yet sown. Gen. ii. 25. And their beautiful bodies were not capable of injuries from the air: so they had no need of cloaths, which are originally the badges of our shame. They were liable to no diseases nor pains: and, though they were not to live idle, yet toil, weariness, and sweat of the brows were not known in this state.

Fifthly, Man had a life of pure delight, and undreggy pleasure, in this state. Rivers of pure pleasure ran through it. The earth, with the product thereof, was now in its glory; nothing had yet come in to mar the beauty of the creatures. God placed him not in a common place of the earth; but in Eden, a place eminent for pleasantness, as the name of it imports; nay, not only in Eden, but in the garden of Eden; the most pleasant spot of that pleasant place: a garden planted by God himself, to be the mansion-house of this his favourite. When God made the other living creatures. he faid, Let the water bring forth the moving creature, Gen. i. 20. and, Let the earth bring forth the living creature, ver. 24. But when man was to be made, he faid, Let us make man, ver. 26. So when the rest of the earth was to be furnished with herbs and trees, God said, Let the earth bring forth grass-and the fruit-tree, &c. ver. 11. But of paradile it is faid, God planted it, ch. ii. 8. which cannot but denote a fingular excellency in that garden, beyond all other parts of the then beautiful earth. He was provided with every thing necessary and delightful; for there was every tree that is pleasant to the fight, and good for food, ver. 9. He knew not those delights which luxury has invented for the gratification of lufts: but his delights were fuch as came out of the hand of God, without paffing through finful hands, which always leave marks of impurity on what they touch. So his delights were pure, his pleasures refined. Yet may I show you a more excellent way: wisdom had entered into his heart; furely, then, knowledge was pleafant unto his foul. What delight do some find in their discoveries of the works of nature, by those scraps of knowledge which they have gathered! but how much more exquisite pleasure had Adam, while his piercing eyes read the book of God's works, which God laid before him, to the end he might glorify him in the same; and therefore he certainly sitted him for the work! But above all, his knowledge of God, and that as his God, and the communion which he had with him, could not but afford him the most refined and exquisite pleasure in the inmost recesses of his heart. Great is that delight which the saints find in those views of the glory of God, which their fouls are sometimes let into; while they are compassed about with many infirmities: and much may well be allowed to sinless Adam; who no doubt had a peculiar relish of those pleasures.

Lastly, He was immortal. He would never have died, if he had not finned; it was in case of fin that death was threatened, Gen. ii. 17. which shews it to be the consequence of sin, and not of the sinless human nature. The perfect constitution of his body, which came out of God's hand very good; and the righte-outnets and holinets of his foul, removed all inward causes of death: nothing being prepared for the grave's devouring mouth but the vile body, Phil. iii. 21. and those who have sinned, Job xxiv. 19: and God's special care of his innocent creature fecured him against outward violence. The apostle's testimony is express, Rom. v. 12. By one man fin entered into the world, and death by fin. Behold the door by which death came in ! Satan wrought with his lies till he got it opened, and so death entered; therefore is he said to have been a murderer from the beginning, John viii. 44.

Thus have I shewn you the holiness and happiness of man in this state. If any shall say, What is all this to us, who never tasted of that holy and happy state? They must know, it nearly concerns us, as Adam was the root of all mankind, our common head and representative, who received from God our inheritance and stock, to keep it for himself, and his children, and to convey it to them. The Lord put all mankind's stock (as it were) in one ship; and 'as we ourselves would have done, he made our common suther the pilot. He

put a bleffing in the root, to have been, if rightly managed, diffused into all the branches. According to our text, making Adam upright, he made man upright: and all mankind had that uprightness in him; for, if the root be holy, so are the branches. But more of this afterwards. Had Adam stood, none would have quarrelled with the representation.

The Dostrine of the State of Innocence applied.

Use I. For information. This shews us, (1.) That not God, but man himself, was the cause of his ruin. God made him upright; his Creator fet him up, but he threw himself down. Was the Lord's directing and inclining him to good, the reason of his woeful choice? Or did heaven deal fo sparingly with him, that his preffing wants fent him to hell to feek fupply? Nay, man was, and is the cause of his own ruin. (2.) God may most justly require of men perfect obedience to his law, and condemn them for their not obeying it perfectly, though now they have no ability to keep it. In fo doing, he gathers but where he has strawed. He gave man ability to keep the whole law; man has lost it by his own fault: but his fin could never take away that right which God hath, to exact perfect obedience of his creature, and to punish in case of disobedience. (2.) Behold here the infinite obligation we lie under to Jefus Christ, the second Adam, who with his own precious blood has bought our freedom, and freely makes offer of it again to us, Hof. xiii. 9. and that with the advantage of everlasting security, that it can never be altogether lost any more, John x. 28, 29. Free grace will fix those whom free-will shook down into a gulf of

Use II. This conveys a reproof to three forts of persons. (1.) To those who hate religion, in the power of it, wherever it appears; and can take pleasure in nothing but in the world, and their lusts. Surely those men are far from righteousness; they are haters of God, Rom. i. 30. for they are haters of his image. Upright Adam in Paradise would have been a great eye-fore to all such persons; as he was to the serpent, whose seed

they prove themselves to be, by their malignity. (2:) It reproves those who put religion to shame, and thote who are ashamed of religion, before a graceless world. There is a generation, who make so bold with the God who made them, and can in a moment crush them, that they ridicule piety, and make a mock at seriousness. Against respon do ye sport, yourselves? Against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? Isa. lvii. 4. Is it not against God himself, whose image, in some measure restored to some of his creatures, makes them fools in your eyes? But be ye not, mockers, lest your bands be made strong, Ifa. xxviii. 22. Holiness was the glory which God put on man when he made him: but now the fons of men turn that glory into shame, because they themselves glory in their shame. There are others that fecretly approve of religion, and in religious company will profess it; who, at other times, to be neighbour-like, are ashamed to own it: so weak are they, that they are blown over with the wind of the wicked's mouth. A broad laughter; an impious jest, a scoffing jeer out of a profane mouth, is, to many, an unanswerable argument against religion and scriousness; for, in the cause of religion, they are as filly doves without heart: O! that fuch would confider that weighty word, Mark viii. 38. Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my reords, in this adulterous and finful generation, of him alfo shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels. (3.) It reproves the proud felf-conceited profesfor, who admires himself in a garment of rags, which he hath patched together. There are many who, when once they have gathered fome fcraps of knowledge of religion, and have attained to some reformation of life, swell big with conceit of themselves; a sad sign that the effects of the fall lie so heavy upon them, that they have not as yet come to themselves, Luke xv. 17. They have eyes behind, to fee their attainments; but no eyes within, no eyes before, to fee their wants, which would furely humble them: for true knowledge makes men to see, both what once they were, and what they are at present; and so is humbling, and will not suffer them

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to be content with any measure of grace attained; but inclines them to press forward, forgetting the things that are behind, Phil. iii. 13, 14. But those men are such a spectacle of commisseration, as one would be that had set his palace on fire, and were glorying in a cottage which he had built for himself out of the rubbish, though so very weak, that it could not stand against a storm.

Use III. Of lamentation. Here was a stately building; man like a fair palace, but now lying in alhes: let us stand and look on the ruins, and drop a tear. This is a lamentation, and shall be for lamentation. Could we avoid weeping, if we faw our country ruined, and turned by the enemy into a wilderness? if we saw our houses on fire, and our property perishing in the flames? But all this comes far short of the dismal fight; Man fallen as a star from heaven! Ah! may we not now fay, O that we were as in months past! when there was no stain in our nature, no cloud on our minds, no pollution in our hearts *! Had we never been in better case, the matter had been less: but they that were brought up in scarlet, do now embrace dunghills. Where is our primitive glory now? once no darkness in the mind, no rebellion in the will, no diforder in the affections. But ah! How is the faithful city become an barlot? righteoufu fs lodged in it; but now murderers. Our filver is become drofs, our wine mixed with water. That heart which was once the temple of God, is now turned into a den of thieves. Let our name be Ichabod, for the glory is departed. Happy wast thou, O man! who was like unto thee! no pain, no fickness could affect thee, no death could approach thee, no figh was

The author means this as the language of those who have nothing but the fall and its misery in view. But the believer in Christ may say, My lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, Psal. xvi. 5, 6. I am now more exalted than I should have been, had I retained my primitive innocency: for though a sinner by nature and practice, and, while I continue on earth, subject to the consequent miseries of sin, yet I am bone of his bone, and stell of his stell, who is God over all, blessed for ever. Had I kept my first state, I should have had only my own righteousness; now I have the righteousness of God, and his Spirit as my portion and eternal inheritance.

heard from thee, till these bitter fruits were plucked from the forbidden tree. Heaven shone upon thee, and earth smiled: thou wast the companion of angels, and the envy of devils. But how low is he now laid, who was created for dominion, and made lord of the world! The crown is fallen from our head: wo unto us that we have finned. The creatures that waited to do him fervice, are now, fince the fall, fet in battle array against him; and the least of them, having commission, proves too hard for him. Waters overflow the old world; fire confumes Sodom; the stars in their courses fight against Sisera; frogs, flies, lice, &c. turn executioners to Pharaoh and his Egyptians; worms eat up Herod: yea, man needs a league with the beafts, yea, with the very stones of the field, Job v. 23. having reason to fear that every one that findeth him will flay him. Alas! how are we fallen! how are we plunged into a gulf of misery! The sun has gone down on us; death has come in at our windows; our enemies have put out our two eyes, and sport themselves with our miseries. Let us then lie down in the dust; let shame and confusion cover us. Nevertheless, there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Come then, O finner! look to Jesus Christ, the second Adam: quit the first Adam, and his covenant; come over to the Mediator and Surety of the new and better covenant; and let your hearts fay, Be thou our ruler, and let this breach be under thy hand. Let your eye trickle down, and cease not, without any intermission, till the Lord look down, and bekold from heaven, Lam. iii. 49, 50.

S T A T E II.

NAMELY,

The STATE of Nature, or of Entire Depravity.

HEAD I.

The SINFULNESS of MAN'S Natural State.

GENESIS vi. 5.

And God faw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

We have feen what man was, as God made him; a lovely and happy creature: let us view him now; as he hath unmade himfelf; and we shall fee him a sinful and miserable creature. This is the sad state we were brought into by the fall; a state as black and doleful as the former was glorious: and this we commonly call, The state of nature, or, Man's natural state, according to that of the apostle, Eph. ii. 3. And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. And herein two things are to be considered: 1st, The sinfulness; 2dly, The misery of this state, in which all the unregenerate live. I begin with the sinfulness of man's natural state, whereof the text gives us a full, though short account; And God saw that the wickedness of man was great, &c.

The scope and design of these words are to clear God's justice in bringing the flood on the old world. There are two particular causes taken notice of in the preceding verses. (1.) Mixed marriages, ver. 2. The sour of God, the posterity of Seth and Enos, professor of the true religion, married with the daughters of men,

the profane curfed race of Cain. They did not carry the matter before the Lord, that he might chuse for them, Pfalm xlviii. 4. But without any respect to the will of God, they chose not according to the rules of their faith, but of their fancy; they faw that they. were fair: and their marriage with them occasioned their divorce from God. This was one of the causes of the deluge, which swept away the old world. Would to God that all professors in our day could plead not guilty: but though that fin brought on the deluge, yet the deluge hath not fwept away that fin; which, as of old, so in our day, may justly be looked upon as one of the causes of the decay of religion. It was an ordinary thing among the Pagans, to change their gods, as they changed their condition into a married lot: many fad instances the Christian world affords of the same, as if people were of Pharaoh's opinion, That religion is only for those that have no other care upon their heads, Exod. v. 17. (2.) Great oppression, ver. 4. There were giants in the earth in those days, men of great stature, great strength, and monstrous wickedness, filling of the earth with violence, ver. 11. But neither their ftrength, nor treasures of wickedness, could profit them in the day of wrath. Yet the gain of oppression Itill carries many over the terror of this dreadful example. Thus much for the connexion, and what parricular crimes that generation was guilty of. But every person that was swept away with the flood could not be guilty of these things; and shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Therefore, in my text, there is a general indictment drawn up against them all, The wickedness of man was great in the earth, &c. and clearly proved, for God saw it. Two things are here laid to their charge.

First, Corruption of life, wickedness, great wickedness. I understand this of the wickedness of their lives; for it is plainly distinguished from the wickedness of their hearts. The sins of their outward conversation were great in the nature of them, and greatly aggravated by their attendant circumstances: and this not only among those of the race of curied Cain, but those of hely

Seth; the wickedness of man was great. And then it is added, in the earth: (1.) To vindicate God's feverity, in that he not only cut off finners, but defaced the beauty of the earth, and fwept off the brute creature's from it, by the deluge; that as men had fet the mark's of their impiety, God might fet the marks of his indignation on the earth. (2.) To shew the heinousness of their fin, in making the earth, which God had fo adorned for the use of man, a fink of fin, and a stage whereon to act their wickedness, in defiance of heaven. God faw the corruption of life; he not only knew it, and took notice of it; but he made them to know that he took notice of it, and that he had not forfaken

the earth, though they had forfaken heaven.

Secondly, Corruption of nature, Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. their wicked practifes are here traced to the fountain and fpring-head: a corrupt heart was the fource of all. The foul, which was made upright in all its faculties, is now wholly disordered. The heart, that was made according to God's own heart, is now the reverse of it. a forge of evil imaginations, a fink of inordinate affections, and a store-house of all impiety, Mark vii. 21, 22. Behold the heart of the natural man, as it is opened in our text! The mind is defiled; the thoughts of the heart are evil; the will and affections are defiled; the imagination of the thoughts of the hearts, (i. e. whatfoever the heart frameth within itself by thinking, such as judgement, choice, purposes, devices, desires, every inward motion,) or rather, the frame of thoughts of the heart (namely, the frame, make, or mould of these, I Chron. xxix. 18.) is evil. Yea, and ever imagination, every frame of his thoughts, is fo. The heart is ever framing something; but never one right thing: the frame of thoughts in the heart of man is exceeding various; yet are they never cast into a right frame. But is there not, at least, a mixture of good in them? No, they are only evil; there is nothing in them truly good, and acceptable to God: nor can any thing be so that comes out of that forge; where not the Spirit of God, but the prince of the

power of the air worketh, Eph. ii. 2. whatever changes may be found in them, are only from evil to evil: for the imagination of the heart, or frame of thoughts, in natural men, is evil continually, or every day. From the first day to the last day in this state, they are in mid-night darkness; there is not a glimmering of the light of holiness, in them: not one holy thought can ever be produced by the unholy heart. O what a vile heart is this! O what a corrupt nature is this! The tree that always brings forth fruit, but never good fruit, whatever foil it be fet in, whatever pains be taken with it, must naturally be an evil tree: and what can that heart be, whereof every imagination, every fet of thoughts, is only evil, and that continually? Surely that corruption is engrained in our hearts, inter-woven with our very natures, has funk into the marrow of our fouls, and will never be cured but by a miracle of grace. Now, fuch is man's heart, fuch is his nature, till regenerating grace change it. God, that searcheth the heart, saw man's heart was so, he took special notice of it: and the faithful and true witness cannot mistake our case; though we are most apt to mistake ourfelves in this point, and generally overlook it.

Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, faying, What is that to us? Let that generation of whom the text speaks see to that: For the Lord has left the case of that generation on record, to be a looking-glass to all after-generations; wherein they may fee their own corruption of heart, and what their lives would be too, if he restrained them not: for, as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man, Prov. xxvii. 19. Adam's fall has framed all men's hearts alike in this matter. Hence the apostle, Rom. iii. 10—18. proves the corruption of the nature, hearts, and lives of all men, from what the Psalmist says of the wicked in his day, Pfal. xiv. 1, 2, 3. Pfal. v. 9. Pial. cxl. 3. Pfal. x. 7. Pfal. xxxvi. 1. and from what Jeremiah faith of the wicked in his day, Jer. ix. 3. and from what Isaiah says of those that lived in his time, Ha. lvii. 7, 8. and concludes, ver. 19. Now we know, what things soever the law faith, it faith to them webo are

under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Had the history of the deluge been transmitted unto us, without the reason thereof in the text, we might from thence have gathered the corruption and total depravity of man's nature: for what other quarrel could the holy and just God have, with the infants that were destroyed by the flood, seeing they had no actual sin? If we saw a wife man, who having made a curious piece of work, and heartily approved of it when he gave it out of his hand, as fit for the use it was designed for, rise up in wrath, and break it all in pieces, when he looked on it afterwards; should we not thence conclude, that the frame of it had been quite marred, fince it came out of his hand, and that it does not ferve for the use it was at first defigned for? How much more, when we fee the holy and wife God destroying the work of his own hands, once folemnly pronounced by him very good, may we not conclude, that the original frame thereof is utterly marred, that it cannot be mended, but must needs be new-made, or lost altogether? Gen. vi. 6, 7. It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart: and the Lord faid, I will destroy man, or blot him out; as a man doth a sentence out of a book, that cannot be corrected, by cutting off some letters, fyllables, or words, and interlining others here and there; but must needs be wholly new-framed. But did the deluge carry off this corruption of man's nature? Did it mend the matter? No, it did not. God, in his holy providence, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the new world may become guilty before God, as well as the old, permits that corruption of nature to break out in Noah, the father of the new world, after the deluge was over. Behold him, as another Adam, finning in the fruit of a tree, Gen. ix. 20, 21. He planted a vineyard, and he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent. More than that, God gives the same reason against a new deluge, which he gives in our text, for bringing that on the old world: I will not (faith he) again curse the ground asy more for man' Jake, for the imagination of man's heart

is evil from his youth, Gen. viii. 21. whereby it is intimated, that there is no mending of the matter by this means; and that if he should always take the same courfe with men that he had done, he would be always fending deluges on the earth, feeing the corruption of man's nature remains still. But though the flood could not carry off the corruption of nature, yet it pointed at the way how it is to be done; to wit, that men must be born of water and of the Spirit, raifed from spiritual death in fin, by the grace of Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood; out of which a new world of faints arise in regeneration, even as the new world of finners out of the waters, where they had long laid buried (as it were) in the ark. This we learn from 1 Pet.iii. 20, 21 where the apostle, speaking of Noah's ark, saith, Wherein few, that is, eight fouls, were faved in water: the like figure rubereunto even baptism doth also now save us. Now the waters of the deluge being a like figure to baptism, it planly follows, that they signified (as baptilm doth) the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. To conclude, then, those waters, though now dried up, may ferve us still for a looking-glass, in which we may see the total corruption of our nature, and the necessity of regeneration.

From the text, thus explained, arifeth this weighty point of doctrine, which he that runs may read in it, viz. Man's nature is now wholly corrupted. There is a fad alteration, a wonderful overturn, in the nature of man: where, at first, there was nothing evil, now there is nothing good. In prosecuting this doctrine, I

shall,

First, Confirm it.

Secondly, Represent this corruption of nature in its feveral parts.

Thirdly, Shew you how man's nature comes to be thus corrupted.

Lastly, Make application.

That Man's Nature is corrupted.

First, I am to confirm the doctrine of the corruption of nature; to hold the glass to your eyes, wherein you

may see your sinful nature; which, though God takes particular notice of it, many quite overlook. Here we ihall consult, 1. God's works. 2. Men's experience and observation.

I. For Scripture-proof, let us consider,

First, How the Scripture takes particular notice of fallen Adam's communicating his image to his postes rity, Gen. v. 3. Adam begat a son in his oven likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth. Compare with this ver. 1. of that chapter, In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made be him. Behold here, how the image after which man was made, and the image after which he is begotten, are opposed! Man was created in the likeness of God: that is, the holy and righteous God made a holy and righteous creature: but fallen Adam begat a fon, not in the likeness of God, but in his own likeness; that is, corrupt sinful Adam begat a corrupt finful son. For as the image of God bore righteousness and immortality in it, as was shewn before; so this image of fallen Adam bore corruption and death in it, I Cor. xv. 49, 50. compare ver. 22. Moses in the fifth chapter of Genesis, giving us the first bill of mortality that ever was in the world, ushers it in with this, that dying Adam begat mortals. Having finned, he became mortal, according to the threatening; and so he begat a son in his own likeness, sinful, therefore mortal. Thus fin and death passed on all. Doubticfs he begat both Cain and Abel in his own likenefs, as well as Seth. But it is not recorded of Abel, because he left no issue behind him, and his falling the first sacrifice to death in the world, was a fufficient document of it: nor of Cain, to whom it might have been thought peculiar, because of his monstrous wickedness; and, besides, his posterity was drowned in the slood: but it is recorded of Seth, because he was the father of the holy feed; and from him all mankind, fince the flood, has descended, and fallen Adam's own likeness with them.

Secondly, It appears from that text of Scripture, Job xiv. 4. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Our first parents were unclean, how then can we

be clean? How could our immediate parents be clean? how can our children be fo? The uncleanness here aimed at, is a finful uncleanness; for it is such as makes man's days full of trouble: and it is natural, being derived from unclean parents: Man is born of a woman, ver. 1. And how can be be clean that is born of a woman? Job xxv. 4. The omnipotent God, whose power is not here challenged, could bring a clean thing out of an unclean; and did so, in the case of the man Christ: but no other being can. Every person that is born, according to the course of nature, is born unclean. If the root be corrupt, so must the branches be. Neither is the matter mended, though the parents be fanctified ones: for they are but holy in part, and that by grace, not by nature; and they beget their children as men, not as holy men. Wherefore, as the circumcifed parent begets an uncircumcifed child; and after the purest grain is fown, we reap corn with the chaff; fo the holiest parents beget unholy children, and cannot communicate their grace to them, as they do their nature; which many godly parents find true in their fad experience.

Thirdly, Confider the confession of the Psalmist David, Psal. lvi. 5. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Here he ascends from his actual sin, to the fountain of it, namely, corrupt nature. He was a man according to God's own heart; but from the beginning it was not so with him. He was begotten in lawful marriage: but when the lump was shapen in the womb, it was a sinful lump. Hence the corruption of nature is called the old man; being as old as ourselves, older than grace, even in those

that are fanctified from the womb.

Fourthly, Hear our Lord's determination of the point, John iii. 8. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Behold the universal corruption of mankind—all are flesh! Not that all are frail, though that is a sad truth too; yea, and our natural frailty is an evidence of our natural corruption; but that's not the sense of this text: the meaning of it is,—all are corrupt and sinful, and that naturally: hence our Lord argues, that because they are flesh, therefore they must be born again, or else

they cannot enter into the kingdom of God, ver. 3. 5. And as the corruption of our nature evidenceth the absolute necessity of regeneration; so the absolute necessity of regeneration plainly proves the corruption of our nature; for why should a man need a second birth, if his nature were not quite marred in his first birth? Infants must be born again; for that is an exception, John iii. 3. which admits of no exception. Therefore they were circumcised under the Old Testament; as having the body of the sins of the sless (which is conveyed to them by natural generation) to put off, Col. ii. 11. And now, by the appointment of Jesus Christ, they are

to be baptized; which fays they are unclean, and that there is no falvation for them, but by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 5.

Fifthly, Man certainly is funk very low now, in comparison of what he once was. God made him but a little lower than the angels; but now we find him likened to the beafts that perish. He hearkened to a brute, and is now become like one of them. Like Nebuchadnezzar, his portion (in his natural flate) is with the beafts, minding only earthly things, Phil. iii. 19. Nay, brutes, in some fort, have the advantage of the natural man, who is funk a degree below them. He is more witless, in what concerns him most, than the stork, or the turtle, or the crane, or the swallow, in what is for their interest, Jer. viii. 7. He is more stupid than the ox or the ass, Isa.i. 3. I find him fent to school, to learn of the ant, which has no guide or leader to go before her; no overseer or officer to compel or stir her up to work; no ruler, but may do as she lists, being under the dominion of none; yet provideth her meat in the fummer and harvest, Prov. vi. 6, 7, 8. while the natural man has all these, and yet exposeth himself to eternal flarving. Nay, more than all this, the Scripture holds out the natural man, not only as wanting the good qualities of those creatures, but as a compound of the evil qualities of the worst of the creatures; in whom the fierceness of the lion, the craft of the fox, the unteachableness of the wild ass, the filthiness of the dog and fwine, the poison of the asp, and such like, meet. Truth

itself calls them serpents, a generation of vipers; yea, more, even children of the devil, Mat. xxiii. 33. John viii. 44. Surely, then, man's nature is miserably corrupted.

Lastly, We are by nature children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3.

Lastly, We are by nature children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. We are worthy of, and liable to the wrath of God; and this by nature: therefore, doubtless, we are by nature sinful creatures. We are condemned before we have done good or evil: under the curse, before we know what it is. But will a lion roar in the forest, while he hath no prey? Amos iii. 4. that is, will the holy and just God roar in his wrath against man, if he be not, by his sin, made a prey for his wrath? No, he will not, he cannot. Let us conclude, then, that, according to the word of God, man's nature is a corrupt nature.

II. If we confult experience, and observe the case of the world, in those things that are obvious to any perfon who will not shut his eyes against clear light, we shall quickly perceive such fruits as discover this root of bitterness. I shall propose a few things, that may

ferve to convince us in this point.

First, Who sees not a flood of miseries overflowing the world? Whither can a man go, where he shall not dip his foot, if he go not over head and ears in it? Every one, at home and abroad, in city and country, in palaces and cottages, is groaning under some one thing or other ungrateful to him. Some are oppressed with poverty, some chastened with sickness and pain, fome are lamenting their loffes; none wants a cross of one fort or another. No man's condition is so fost, but there is some thorn of uneasiness in it. At length death, the wages of fin, comes after these, its harbingers, and fweeps all away. Now, what but fin has opened the fluice? There is not a complaint or figh heard in the world, nor a tear that falls from our eye, but it is an evidence that man is fallen as a star from heaven; for God distributeth forrows in his anger, Job xxi. 17. This is a plain proof of the corruption of nature: forasmuch as those that have not yet actually finned, have their share of these forrows; yea, and draw their first breath in the world weeping, as if they knew this world, at first fight, to be a Bochim, the place of weepers.

There are graves of the smallest, as well as of the greatest fize, in the church-yard; and there are never wanting some in the world, who, like Rachel, are weeping for their children, because they are not, Matth. ii. 18.

Secondly, Observe how early this corruption of nature begins to appear in young ones. Solomon observes, that even a child is known by his doings, Prov. xx. 11. It may soon be discerned what way the bias of the heart lies. Do not the children of fallen Adam, before they can go alone, sollow their father's footsteps? What a vast deal of little pride, ambition, curiosity, vanity, wilfulness, and averseness to good, appears in them? And, when they creep out of infancy, there is a necessity of using the rod of correction, to drive away the foolishness that is bound in their hearts, Prov. xxii. 15. which shews, that, if grace prevail not, the child will be as Ishmael, a wild ass-man, as the word is, Gen. xvi. 12.

Thirdly, Take a view of the manifold gross out-breakings of fin in the world: the wickedness of man is yet great in the earth. Behold the bitter fruits of the corruption of our nature, Hof. iv. 2. " By fweering, and lying, and killing, and flealing, and committing adultery, they break out (like the breaking forth of waters) and blood toucheth blood." The world is filled with filthiness, and all manner of lewdness, wickedness, and profanity. From whence comes the deluge of fin on the earth, but from the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, the heart of man; out of which proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, coverousness, &c. Mark vii. 21, 22. Ye will, it may be, thank God with a whole heart, that ye are not like other men; and indeed ye have more reason for it than, I fear, ye are aware of; for, as in water face answereth face, so the heart of man to man, Prov. xxvii. 19. As, looking into clear water, ye see your own face; so looking into your heart, ye may see other men's. there: and looking into other men's, in them ye may fee your own. So that the most vile and profanewretches that are in the world, should serve you for a lookingglass; in which you ought to discern the corruption of your own nature: and if you were to do fo, ye would,

with a heart truly touched, thank God, and not your selves, indeed, that ye are not as other men in your lives; seeing the corruption of nature is the same in you as in them.

Fourthly, Cast your eye upon these terrible convulfions which the world is thrown into by the lusts of men. Lions make not a prey of lions, nor wolves of wolves; but men are turned wolves to one another, biting and devouring one another. Upon how flight occasions will men sheath their swords in one another's bowels? The world is a wilderness, where the clearest fire which men can carry about with them will not fright away the wild beafts that inhabit it (and because they are men, and not brutes), but one way or other they will be wounded. Since Cain shed the blood of Abel, the earth has been turned into a flaughter-house; and the chase has been continued since Nimrod began his hunting; on the earth, as in the fea, the greater still devouring the leffer. When we fee the world in fuch a ferment, every one stabbing another with words or fwords, we may conclude there is an evil spirit among them. These violent heats among Adam's sons, speak the whole body to be diftempered, the whole head to be fick, and the whole heart faint: they furely proceed from an inward cause, James vi. 1. lusts that war in our members.

Fifthly, Confider the necessity of human laws, fenced with terrors and feverities; to which we may apply what the apostle says, 1 Tim. i. 9. That the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lavoless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, &c. Man was made for society; and God himself said of the first man, when he had created him, that it was not meet he should be alone: yet the case is such now, that in society he must be hedged in with thorns. And that from hence we may the better fee the corruption of man's nature, confider, (1.) Every man naturally loves to be at full liberty, to have his own will for his law; and if he were to follow his natural inclinations, he would vote himself out of the reach of all laws, divine and human. Hence some (the power of whose hands has been answerable to the natural inclination) have indeed made themselves abso-

lute, and above laws; agreeable to man's monstrous design at first, to be as gods, Gen. iii. 5. Yet, (2.) There is no man that would willingly adventure to live in a lawless fociety: therefore, even pirates and robbers have laws among themselves, though the whole society casts off all respect to law and right. Thus men discover themselves to be conscious of the corruption of nature; not daring to trust one another, but upon security. (3.) How dangerous foever it is to break through the hedge, yet the violence of lusts makes many daily adventure to run the risk. They will not only facrifice their credit and conscience, which last is lightly esteemed in the world; but for the pleasure of a few moments, immediately fucceeded with terror from within, they will lay themselves open to a violent death, by the laws of the land wherein they live. (4.) The laws are often made to yield to men's lusts. Sometimes whole societies run into fuch extravagancies, that, like a company of prisoners, they break off their fetters, and put their guard to flight; and the voice of laws cannot be heard for the noise of arms. And seldom is there a time wherein there are not some persons so great and daring, that the laws dare not look their impetuous lusts in the face; which made David fay, in the case of Joab, who had murdered Abner, These men, the sons of Zerwiah, be too hard for me, 2 Sam. iii. 39. Lusts sometimes grow too strong for laws, so that the law is flacked, as the pulse of a dying man, Hab. i. 3, 4. (5.) Consider what necessity often appears of amending old laws, and making new ones; which have their rife from new crimes, that man's nature is very fruitful of. There would be no need of mending the hedge, if men were not like unruly beafts, still breaking it down. It is astonishing to see what a figure the Israelites, who were separated unto God from among all the nations of the earth, make in their hiftory: what horrible confusions were among them, when there was no king in Ifrael? as you may fee from the 18th to the 21st chapter of Judges: how hard it was to reform them, when they had the best of magistrates! and how quickly they turned afide again, when they got wicked rulers! I cannot but think, that one grand

design of that sacred history, was to discover the corruption of man's nature, the absolute need of the Messiah, and his grace; and that we ought, in the reading of it, to improve it to that end. How cutting is that word which the Lord has to Samuel concerning Saul, I Sam. ix. 17. The same shall reign over (or, as the word is, shall restrain) my people? Othe corruption of man's nature! The awe and dread of the God of heaven restrains them not; but they must have gods on earth to do it, to put

them to shame, Judges xviii. 7.

Sixthly, Consider the remains of natural corruption in the faints. Though grace has entered, yet corruption is not expelled; though they have got the new creature, yet the old corrupt nature remains: and these struggle together within them, as the twins in Rebekah's womb, Gal. v. 17. They find it present with them at all times, and in all places, even in the most retired corners. It a man has an ill neighbour, he may remove; if he has an ill fervant, he may put him away; if a bad yoke-fellow, he may fometimes leave the house, and be free of molestation that way: but should the faint go into a. wilderness, or set up his tent in some remote rock in the sea, where never foot of man, beast, nor fowl, had touched, there will it be with him. Should he be, with Paul, caught up to the third heavens, it will come back with him, 2 Cor. xii. 7. It follows him, as the shadow doth the body; it makes a blot in the fairest line which he can draw. It is like the fig-tree on the wall, which how nearly foever it was cut, yet it still grew, till the wall was thrown down: for the roots of it are fixed in the heart, while the faint is in the world, as with bands of iron and brass. It is especially active when he would do good, Rom. vii. 21. then the fowls come down upon the carcases. Hence often in holy duties, the spirit of a faint (as it were) evaporates; and he is left before he is aware, like Michal, with an image in the bed instead of an husband. I need not stand to prove to the godly, the corruption of nature in them; for they groan under it; and to prove it to them, were to hold out a candle to let them fee the fun: as for the wicked, they are ready to account mole-hills in the faints as big as moun-

tains; if not to reckon them all hypocrites. But confider these few things on this head. (1.) If it be thus in the green tree, how must it be in the dry? The faints are not born faints; but made so by the power of regenerating grace. Have they got a new nature, and yet the old remains with them? How great must that corsuption be in others, in whom there is no grace. (2.) The faints groan under it as a heavy burden: hear the apoftle, Rom. vii. 24. O veretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death! What though the carnal man lives at eafe and quiet, and the corruption of nature is not his burden; is he therefore free from it? No, no; it is because he is dead, that he feels not the finking weight. Many a groan is heard from a fick-bed; but never any from a grave. In the faint, as in the fick man, there is a mighty flruggle; life and death striving for the mastery: but in the natural man, as in the dead corps, there is no noise; because death bears full sway. (3.) The godly man resists the old corrupt nature; he strives to mortify it, yet it remains; he endeavours to starve it, and by that means to weaken it, yetitisactive: how must it spread, then, and strengthen itself in that soul, where it is not starved, but fed! And this is the case of all the unregenerate, who make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. If the garden of the diligent afford him new work daily, in cutting off and rooting up; furely that of the fluggard must needs be all grown over with thorns.

Laftly, I shall add but one observation more, and that is, that in every man naturally the image of faller, Adam appears. Some children, by their features, and lineaments of their face, do, as it were, father themselves: and thus we resemble our first parents. Every one of us bears the image and impressions of their fall: and to evince the truth of this, I appeal to the consci-

ences of all, in the following particulars.

First, Is not finful curiosity natural to us? And is not this a print of Adam's image? Gen. iii. 6. Is not man naturally much more desirous to know new things, than to practise old known truths? How much like old Adam we look in this, itching after novelties, and disrelishing

old folid doctrines! We feek after knowledge rather than holiness; and study most to know those things which are least edifying. Our wild and roving fancies need a bridle to curb them, while good solid affections

must be quickened and spurred up.

Secondly, If the Lord, by his holy law and wife providence, puts a restraint upon us, to keep us back from any thing, doth not that restraint whet the edge of our natural inclinations, and make us so much the keener in our defires? And in this do we not betray it plainly, that we are Adam's children? Gen. iii. 2, 3. 6. I think this cannot be denied; for daily observation evinceth, that it is a natural principle, that stolen waters are fweet, and bread eaten in fecret is pleafant, Prov. ix. 17. The very heathens were convinced, that man was posfessed with this spirit of contradiction, though they knew not the fpring of it. How often do men let themselves loose in those things, in which, if God had left them at liberty, they would have bound up themfelves! but corrupt nature takes a pleasure in the very jumping over the hedge. And is it not a repeating of our father's folly, that men will rather climb for forbidden fruit, than gather what is shaken off the tree of good providence to them, when they have God's express allowance for it.

Thirdly, Which of all the children of Adam is not naturally disposed to hear the instruction that causeth to err? And was not this the rock our first parents split upon? Gen. iii. 4. 6. How apt is weak man, ever since that time, to parley with temptations! God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not, Job xxxiii. 14. But readily listens to Satan. Men might often come fair off, if they would dismiss temptations with abhorrence, when first they appear; if they would nip them in the bud, they would soon die away: but, alas! though we see the train laid for us, and the fire put to it, yet we stand till it run along, and we are blown up with its force.

Fourthly, Do not the eyes in your head often blind the eyes of the mind? Was not this the very case of our first parents? Gen. iii. 6. Man is never more blind

than when he is looking on the objects that are most pleafing to fense. Ever fince the eyes of our first parents were opened to the forbidden fruit, men's eyes have been the gates of destruction to their fouls; at which impure imaginations and finful defires have entered the heart, to the wounding of the foul, wasting of the conscience, and bringing difinal effects sometimes on whole focieties, as in Achan's case, Josh. vii. 21. Holy Job was aware of this danger, from these two little rowling bodies, which a very small splinter of wood will make useles; so that, (with the king who durst not, with his ten thousand, meet him that came with twenty thousand against him, Luke xiv. 31, 32.) he sendeth and desireth conditions of peace. Job xxxi. 1. I have made a covenant with mine eyes, &c.

Fifthly, Is it not natural to us, to care for the body, even at the expence of the foul? This was one ingredient in the fin of our first parents, Gen. iii. 6. O how happy might we be, if we were but at half the pains about our fouls that we bestow on our bodies! if this question, What must I do to be saved? (Acts xvi. 30.) ran but near as oft through our minds as these questions do, What shall we eat? what shall we drink? wherewithal shall we be cloathed? (Matt, vi. 31.) many a (now) hopeless case would become very hopeful. But the truth is, most men live as if they were nothing but a lump of flesh: or as if their foul served for no other use but, like falt, to keep the body from corrupting. They are flesh, John iii. 6. They mind the things of the flesh, Rom. viii. 5. and they live after the flesh, ver. 13. If the confent of the flesh be got to an action, the confent of the conscience is rarely waited for: yea, the body is often ferved, when the conscience has entered a dissent against it.

Sixthly, Is not every one, by nature, discontented with his prefent lot in the world, or with fome one thing or other in it? This was also Adam's case, Gen. iii. 5, 6. Some one thing is always wanting; fo that man is a creature given to changes. If any doubt this let them look over all their enjoyments; and after a review of them, liften to their own hearts, and they will

hear a fecret murmuring for want of fomething; though, perhaps, if they confidered the matter aright, they would fee that it is better for them to want, than to have that fomething. Since the hearts of our first parents flew out at their eyes, on the forbidden fruit, and a night of darkness was thereby brought on the world, their posterity have a natural disease, which Solomon calls, The wandering of the desire (or, as the word is, the walking of the foul), Eccl. vi. 9. This is a fort of diabolical trance, wherein the foul traverseth the world; feeds itfelf with a thousand airy nothings; snatcheth at this and the other created excellency, in imagination and defire; goes here and there, and every where, except where it should go: and the foul is never cured of this disease, till conquering grace bring it back, to take up its everlasting rest in God, through Christ: but till this be, if man were fet again in paradile, the garden of the Lord, all the pleasures there would not keep him from looking, yea, and leaping over the hedge a fecond time.

Seventhly, Are we not far more easily impressed and influenced by evil councils and examples, than by those that are good? You will see this was the ruin of Adam, Gen. iii. 6. evil example, to this day, is one of Satan's master-devices to ruin men. Though we have, by nature, more of the fox than of the lamb; yet that ill property which fome observe in this creature, viz. that if one lamb skip into a water, the rest that are near will fuddenly follow, may be observed also in the disposition of the children of men; to whom it is very natural to embrace an evil way, because they see others on it before them. Ill example has frequently the force of a violent stream, to carry us over plain duty; but, especially, if the example be given by those we bear a great affection to: our affection, in that case, blinds our judgment; and what we would abhor in others, is complied with to humour them. Nothing is more plain, than that generally men chuse rather to do what the

most do, than what the best do.

Eighthly, Who of all Adam's fons needs to be taught the art of fewing fig-leaves together, to cover their nakedness? Gen. iii. 7. When we have ruined ourselves,

and made ourselves naked, to our shame, we naturally feek to help ourselves by ourselves: many poor shifts are fallen upon, as filly and infignificant as Adam's figleaves. What pains are men at, to cover their fin from their own consciences, and to draw all the fair colours upon it that they can! And when once convictions are fastened upon them, so that they cannot but see themfelves naked, it is as natural for them to attempt to spin a cover to it out of their own bowels, as for fish to fwim in water, or birds to fly in the air. Therefore, the first question of the convinced is, What shall we do? Acts ii. 27 How shall we qualify ourselves? What shall we perform? Not considering, that the new creature is God's own workmanship, (or deed, Eph.ii. 10.) more than Adam confidered and thought of, being cloathed with the skins of facrifices, Gen. iii. 21.

Ninthly, Do not Adam's children naturally follow his footsteps, in hiding themselves from the presence of the Lord? Gen. iii. 8. We are every whit as blind. in this matter as he was, who thought to hide himself from the presence of God among the shady trees of the garden. We are very apt to promife ourselves more fecurity in a fecret fin, than in one that is openly committed. The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me, Job xxiv. 15. Men will freely do that in fecret, which they would be ashamed to do in the presence of a child; as if darkness could hide from the all-feeing God. Are we not naturally careless of communion with God? aye, and averse to it? Never was there any communion between God and Adam's children, where the Lord himself had not the first word. If he were to let them alone, they would never inquire after him. Ifa. lvii. 17. I bid me. Did he feek after a hiding God? Very far from it: He went on in the way of his heart.

Tenthly, How loth are men to confess sin, to take guilt and shame to themselves? Was it not thus in the case before us? Gen. iii. 10. Adam confesseth his nakedness, which he could not get denied; but favs not one word of his fin: the reason of it was, he would fain have hid it if he could. It is as natural for us to hide

fin as to commit it. Many fad instances thereof we have in this world; but a far clearer proof of it we shall get at the day of judgement, the day in which God will judge the secrets of men, Rom. ii. 16. Many a foul mouth will then be seen, which is now wiped, and saith, I have done no wickedness, Prov. xxx. 20.

Laftly, Is it not natural for us to extenuate our finand transfer the guilt upon others? When God examined our guilty first parents, did not Adam lay the blame on the woman? and did not the woman lay the blame on the serpent? Gen. iii. 12, 13. Now Adam's children need not'be taught this hellish policy; for before they can well speak (if they cannot get the fact denied) they will cunningly lift out fomething to leffen their fault, and lay the blame upon another. Nay, fo natural is this to men, that, in the greatest fins, they will lay the fault upon God himself; they will blaspheme his holy providence, under the mistaken name of misfortune, or ill-luck, and thereby lay the blame of their fin at Heaven's door. And was not this one of Adam's tricks after his fall? Gen. iii. 12. And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and 1 did eat. Observe the order of the speech. He makes his apology, in the first place; and then comes his confession: his apology is long; but his confession very short; it is all comprehended in a word, And I did eat. How pointed and distinct is his apology, as if he was afraid his meaning should have been mistaken! The woman, fays he; or that woman; as if he would have pointed the Judge to his own work, of which we read, Gen. ii. 22. There was but one woman then in the world; fo that, one would think he needed not to have been fo nice and exact in pointing at her: yet she is as carefully marked out, in his defence, as if there had been ten thousand: The woman whom thou gavest me: here he speaks as if he had been ruined with God's gift: and, to make the gift look the blacker, it is added to all this, Thou gavest to be with me, as my constant companion, to stand by me as a helper. This looks as if Adam would have fathered an ill defign upon the Lord in giving him this gift. And, after

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all, there is a new demonstrative here, before the sentence is compleat: he says not, the woman gave me; but the woman, she gave me, emphatically; as if he had said, she, even she gave me of the tree. Thus much for his apology. But his confession is quickly over, in one word (as he spoke it) and I did eat. There is nothing here to point to himself, and as little to shew what he had eaten. How natural is this black art to Adam's posterity! He that runs may read it. So universally doth Solomon's observation hold true, Prov. xvi. 3. The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord. Let us then call sallen Adam Father; let us not deny the relation, seeing we bear his image.

To shut up this point, sufficiently confirmed by concurring evidence, from the Lord's word, our own experience, and observation. Let us be perswaded to believe the doctrine of the corruption of our nature; and to look to the Second Adam, the blessed Jesus, for the application of his precious blood, to remove the guilt of our sin; and for the efficacy of his holy Spirit, to make us new creatures, knowing, that except we be born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Of the Corruption of the Understanding.

SECONDLY, I proceed to enquire into the corruption of nature, in the feveral parts thereof. But who can comprehend it? Who can take the exact dimensions of it, in its breadth, length, height, and depth? The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jer. xvii. 9. However, we may quickly perceive as much of it as may be matter of deepest humiliation, and may discover to us the absolute necessity of regeneration. Man, in his natural state, is altogether corrupt: both soul and body are polluted, as the apostle proves at large, Rom. iii. 10—18. As for the soul, this natural corruption has spread itself through all the faculties thereof; and is to be found in the understanding, the will, the affections, the conscience, and the memory.

I. The understanding, that leading faculty, is delpoiled of its primitive glory, and covered over with confusion. We have fallen into the hands of our grand adversary, as Samson into the hands of the Philistines, and are deprived of our two eyes. There is none that understandeth, Rom. iii. 11. Mind and conscience are defiled, Tit. i. 15. The natural man's apprehension of divine things is corrupt, Psal. l. 21. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself. His judgment is corrupt, and cannot be otherwise, seeing his eye is evil: therefore the Scriptures, to shew that man does all wrong, says, Every one did that which was right in his own eyes, Judges xvii. 6. and xxi. 25. And his imaginations, or reasonings, must be cast down, by the power of the word, being of a piece with his judgment, 2 Cor. x. 5. But to point out this corruption of the mind, or understanding, more particularly, let the following things be considered.

First, There is a natural weakness in the minds of men, with respect to spiritual things. The apostle determines, concerning every one that is not endued with the graces of the Spirit, That he is blind, and cannot fee afar off, 2 Pet. i.g. Hence the Spirit of God, in the Scriptures, cloaths, as it were, divine truths with earthly figures, even as parents teach their children, using similitudes, Hos. xii. 10. which; though it doth not cure, yet doth evidence this natural weakness in the minds of men. But there are not wanting plain proofs of it from experience. As, (1.) How hard a task is it to teach many people the common principles of our holy religion, and to make truths fo plain as they may understand them? There must be precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line, Ifa. xxviii. 9. Try the fame persons in other things, they will be found wifer in their generation than the children of light. They understand their work and business in the world, as well as their neighbours; though they be very stupid and unteachable in the matters of God. Tell them how they may advance their worldly wealth, or how they may gratify their lufts, and they will quickly understand thele things; though it is very hard to make them know how their fouls may be faved; or how their hearts may find rest in Jesus Christ. (2.) Consider those who have many advantages beyond the generality of man-

kind; who have had the benefit of good education and instruction; yea, and are blessed with the light of grace, in that measure wherein it is ascribed to the saints on earth; yet how finall a portion have they of the knowledge of divine things! What ignorance and confusion still remains in their minds! How often are they mired even in the matter of practical truths, and speak as a child in these things! It is a pitiful weakness, that we cannot perceive the things which God has revealed to us; and it must needs be a finful weakness, since the law of God requires us to know and believe them. (3.) What dangerous mistakes are to be found amongst men, in concerns of the greatest weight! What woeful delusions prevail over them! Do we not often see those who, in other things, are the wifeft of men, the most notorious fools with respect to their soul's interest? Mat. xi. 25. Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent. Many that are eagle-eyed in the trifles of time, are like owls and bats in the light of life. Nay, truly, the life of every natural man is but one continued dream and delufion; out of which he never awakes, till either, by a new light darted from heaven into his foul, he come to himself, Luke xv. 17. or in hell he lift up his eyes, chap. xvi. 23. Therefore in Scripture account, though he be ever so wife, yet he is a fool, and a simple one.

Secondly, Man's understanding is naturally overwhelmed with gross darkness in spiritual things. Man, at the instigation of the devil, attempting to break out a new light in his mind, (Gen. iii. 5.) instead of that, broke up the doors of the bottomless pit; so as, by the smoke thereof, to be buried in darkness. When God first made man, his mind was a lamp of light; but now when he comes to make him over again, in regeneration, he finds it darkness, Eph. v. 8. Ye were sometimes darkness. Sin has closed the windows of the soul, darkness is over all the region: it is the land of darkness, and shadow of death, where the light is as darkness. The prince of darkness reigns there, and nothing but the works of darkness are framed there. We are born spiritually blind, and cannot be restored without a mi-

racle of grace. This is thy case, whoever thou art, that art not born again. That you may be convinced in this matter, take the following evidences of it.

Evidence 1. The darkness that was upon the face of the world before, and at the time when Christ came, arifing as the Sun of Righteousness upon the earth. When Adam, by his fin, had lost that primitive light with which he was endued at his creation, it pleafed God to make a glorious revelation of his mind and will to him, touching the way of falvation, Gen. iii. 15! This was handed down by him, and other godly fathers before the flood: yet the natural darkness of the mind of man prevailed fo far against that revelation, as to carry off all fense of true religion from the old world, except what remained in Noah's family, which was preferved in the ark. After the flood, as men multiplied on the earth, the natural darkness of the mind prevailed again, and the light decayed, till it died away among the generality of mankind, and was preserved only among the posterity of Shem. And even with them it had nearly fet, when God called Abraham from ferving other gods, Josh. xxiv. 15. God gives Abraham a more clear and full revelation, which he communicates to his family, Gen. xviii. 19. yet the natural darkness wears it out at length, save that it was preferved among the posterity of Jacob. They being carried down into Egypt, that darkness so prevailed, as to leave them very little fense of true religion: and there was a necessity of a new revelation to be made to them in the wilderness. And many a cloud of darkness got above that, now and then, during the time between Moses and Christ. When Christ came, the world was divided into Jews and Gentiles. The Jews, and the true light with them, were within an inclosure, Pfal. cxlvii. 19, 20. Between them and the Gentile world, there was a partition wall of God's making, namely the ceremonial law; and upon that there was reared up another of man's own making, namely a. rooted enmity between the parties, Eph. ii. 14, 15. If we look abroad without the inclosure (and except those proselytes of the Gentiles, who, by means of some rays

of light breaking forth upon them from within the inclofure, having renounced idolatry, worshipped the true God, but did not conform to the Mosaical rites), we see nothing but dark places of the earth, full of the habitations of cruelty, Pfal. lxxiv. 20. Gross darkness covered the face of the Gentile world, and the way of falvation was utterly unknown among them. They were drowned in superstition and idolatry, and had multiplied their idols to fuch a vast number, that above thirty thousand are reckoned to have been worthipped by those of Europe alone. Whatever wisdom was among their philosophers, the world by that wisdom knew not God, i Cor. i. 21. and all their researches in religion were but groping in the dark, Acts xvii. 27. If we look within the inclosure, and, except a few that were groaning and waiting for the confolation of Israel, we shall see a gross darkness on the face of that generation. Though to them were committed the oracles of God, yet they were most corrupt in their doctrine. Their traditions were multiplied, but the knowledge of those things wherein the life of religion lies was loft. Masters of Israel knew not the nature and necessity of regeneration, John iii. 10. Their religion was to build on their birth-privilege, as children of Abraham, Mat. iii. 9. to glory in their circumcifion, and other external ordinances, Philip. iii. 2, 3. And to rest in the law, (Rom. ii. 17.) after they had, by their false glosses, cut it so short, as they might outwardly go well nigh to the fulfilling of it, Mat. v.

Thus was darkness over the face of the world, when Christ the true light came into it; and so is darkness over every foul, till he, as the day-star, arise in the heart. The latter is an evidence of the former. What, but the natural darkness of men's minds, could still thus wear out the light of external revelation, in a matter upon which eternal happiness depends? Men did not forget the way of preserving their lives; but how quickly they loft the knowledge of the way of falvation of their fouls; which are of infinite more weight and worth! When patriarchs and prophets teaching was ineffectual, it became necessary for men to be taught of

God himself, who alone can open the eyes of the understanding. But that it might appear, that the corruption of man's mind lay deeper than to be cured by mere external revelation, there were but very few converted by Christ's preaching, who spoke as never man spake, John xii. 37, 38. The great cure remained to be performed, by the Spirit accompanying the preaching of the apostles; who, according to the promise (John xiv. 12.) were to do greater works. And if we look to the miracles wrought by our bleffed Lord, we shall find, that by applying the remedy to the foul. for the cure of bodily diftempers, (as in the case of the man fick of the palfy, Mat. ix. 2.) he plainly discovered that his main errand into the world was to cure the difeases of the soul. I find a miracle wrought upon one that was born blind, performed in fuch a way, as feems to have been defigned to let the world fee in it, as in a glass, their case and cure; John ix. 6. He made clay, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. What could more fitly represent the blindness of men's minds, than eyes closed up with earth? Isa. vi. 1. Shut their eyes; thut them up by anointing, or casting them toith mortar, as the word will bear. And chap. xliv. 18. He bath shut their eyes: the word properly fignifies, he hath plaistered their eyes; as the house in which the leprofy had been was to be plaistered, Lev. xiv. 42. Thus the Lord's word discovers the design of that strange work; and by it shews us that the eyes of our understanding are naturally shut. Then the blind man must go and wash off this clay in the pool of Siloam: no other water will ferve this purpose. If that pool had not represented him, whom the Father fent into the world to open the blind eyes, Ifa. xlii. 7. I think the evangelist had not given us the interpretation of the name, which, he fays, fignifies fent, John. ix. 7. So we may conclude, that the natural darknefs of our minds is fuch, as there is no cure for, but from the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ, whose eye-salve only can make us fee, Rev. iii. 18.

Evid. 2. Every natural man's heart and life is a mass of darkness, disorder, and confusion; how refined so-

ever he appear in the fight of men. For we ourselves also, faith the apostle Paul, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, Tit. iii. 3. and yet, at the time which this text looks to, he was blamelefs touching the righteoufnefs which is in the law, Phil. iii. 6. This is a plain evidence that the eye is evil, the whole body being full of darkness, Mat. vi. 23. The unrenewed part of mankind is rambling through the world, like fo many blind men, who will neither take a guide, nor can guide themselves; therefore are falling over this and the other precipice, into destruction. Some are running after their covetouiness, till they be pierced through with many forrows; fome flicking in the mire of fentuality; others dashing themselves on the rock of pride and felf-conceit; every one ftumbling on some one stone of stumbling or other: all of them are running themselves upon the sword-point of justice, while they eagerly follow whither their unmortified passions and affections lead them: and while some are lying along in the way, others are coming up, and falling headlong over them. Therefore, wo unto the blind world because of offences, Mat. xviii. 7. Errors in judgment swarm in the world, because it is night, wherein all the beafts of the forest do creep forth. the unregenerate are utterly mistaken in the point of true happiness: for though Christianity hath fixed that matter in point of principle; yet nothing less than overcoming grace can fix it in the practical judgement. All men agree in the defire of being happy: but among unrenewed men, touching the way to happiness, there are almost as many opinions as there are men; they being turned every one to his own way, Isa. liii. 6. They are like the blind Sodomites about Lot's house, all were feeking to find the door, fome grope one part of the wall for it, some another; but none of them could certainly fay he had found it: fo the natural man may stumble on any good but the chief good. Look into thine own unregenerate heart, and there thou wilt fee all turned up-fide down; heaven lying under, and earth a-top. Look into thy life, there thou mayest see how thou art playing the mad-man, snatching at shadows, and neglecting the substance: eagerly flying after that which is not, and slighting that which

is, and will be for ever.

Evid. 3. The natural man is always as a workman left without light; either trifling or doing mischief. Try to catch thy heart at any time that thou wilt, and thou shalt find it either weaving the spider's web, or hatching cockatrice-eggs, (Isa. lix. 5.) roving through the world, or digging into the pit; filled with vanity, or else with vileness; busy doing nothing, or what is worse than nothing. A sad sign of a dark mind.

Evid. 4. The natural man is void of the faving knowledge of spiritual things. He knows not what a God he has to do with; he is unacquainted with Christ; and knows not what fin is. The greatest graceless with are blind as moles in these things. Ay, but some fuch can speak of them to good purpose: so might those Israelites of the temptations, signs and miracles, which their eyes had feen, (Deut. xxix. 3.) to whom, nevertheless, the Lord had not given an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto that day, ver. 4. Many a man that bears the name of a Christian, may make Pharaoh's confession of faith, Exod. v. 2. Iknow not the Lord, neither will they let go what he commands them to part with. God is with them as a prince in disguise among his subjects, who meets with no better treatment from them than if they were his fellows, Pfal. l. 21. Do they know Christ, or see his glory, and any beauty in him for which he is to be defired? If they did, they would not flight him as they do: a view of his glory would so darken all created excellency, that they would take him for, and instead of, all, and gladly close with him, as he offereth himself in the gotpel, John iv. 10. Psal. ix. 10. Mat. xiii.44, 45, 46. Do they know what fin is, who nurse the serpent in their bosom, hold fast deceit, and refuse to let it go? I own, indeed, that they may have a natural knowledge of those things, as the unbelieving Jews had of Christ, whom they faw and converfed with: but there was a spiritual glory in him, perceived by believers only, John i. 14. and in respect of that glory, the (unbelieving) world

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knew him not, ver. 10. the spiritual knowledge of them they cannot have; it is above the reach of the carnal mind, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can be know them, for they are spiritually discerned. He may indeed discourse of them; but no other way, than one can talk of honey or vinegar, who never tasted the sweetness of the one, nor the sourness of the other. He has some notions of spiritual truths, but sees not the things themselves, that are wrapt up in the words of truth, 1 Tim. i. 7. Understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. In a word, natural men fear, seek, consess they know not what. Thus you may see, man's understanding naturally is overwhelmed with gross darkness in spiritual things.

Thirdly, There is in the mind of man a natural bias to evil, whereby it comes to pass, that whatever difficulties it finds, while occupied about things truly good, it acts with a great deal of ease in evil; as being in that case in its own element, Jer. iv. 22. The carnal mind drives heavily in the thoughts of good; but furiously in the thoughts of evil. While holiness is before it, setters are upon it: but when once it has got over the hedge, it is as a bird got out of the cage, and becomes a free-thinker indeed. Let us resect a little on the apprehension and imagination of the carnal mind; and we shall find incontestible evidence of this woeful bias

to evil.

Evidence t. As when a man, by a violent stroke on the head, loseth his sight, there ariseth to him a kind of false light, whereby he seems to see a thousand airy nothings; so man being struck blind to all that is truly good, and for his eternal interest, has a light of another fort brought into his mind; his eyes are opened, knowing evil, and so are the words of the tempter verified, Gen. iii. 5. The words of the prophet are plain, They are raise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge, Jer. iv. 22. The mind of man has a natural dexterity to devise mischies: there are not any so simple, as to want skill to contrive ways to gratify their lusts, and ruin their souls; though the power of every one's

hand cannot reach to put their devices in execution. None needs to be taught this black art; but as weeds grow up, of their own accord, in the neglected ground, fo doth this wisdom (which is earthly, sensual, devilish, Jam. iii. 15.) grow up in the minds of men, by virtue of the corruption of their nature. Why should we be furprised with the product of corrupt wits; their cunning devices to affront heaven, to oppose and run down truth and holiness, and to gratify their own, and other men's lusts? They row with the stream; no wonder that they make great progress: their stock is within them, and increaseth by using of it: and the works of darkness are contrived with the greater advantage, that the mind is wholly destitute of spiritual light, which, if it were in them, in any measure, would so far marr the work, I John iii. 9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; he does it not as by art, wilfully and habitually; for his feed remaineth in him. But on the other hand, it is a sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom, Prov. x. 23. To do witty wickedness nicely (as the word imports) is as a sport or a play to a fool; it comes off with him eafily; and why, but because he is a fool, and hath not wisdom, which would marr the contrivances of darkness? The more natural a thing is, the more cafily it is done.

Evid. 2. Let the corrupt mind have but the advantage of one's being employed in, or present at some piece of service for God; that so the device, if not in itself sinful, yet may become sinful, by its unseasonableness: it will quickly fall on some device or expedient, by its starting aside; which deliberation in season could not produce. Thus Saul, who wist not what to do, before the priest began to consult God, is quickly determined when once the priest's hand was in: his own heart then gave him an answer, and would not allow him to wait an answer from the Lord, I Sam. xiv. 18, 19. Such a devilish dexterity hath the carnal mind, in devising what may most effectually divert men from

their duty to God.

Evid. 3. Doth not the carnal mind naturally strive to grasp spiritual things in imagination; as if the soul

were quite immerfed in flesh and blood, and would turn every thing into its own shape? Let men who are used to the forming of the most abstracted notions, look into their own fouls, and they shall find this bias in their minds; whereof the idolatry which did of old, and still doth, so much prevail in the world, is an incontestible evidence. For it plainly discovers, that men naturally would have a visible deity, and see what they worship; and therefore they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, &c. Rom. i. 23. The reformation of these nations (bleffed be the Lord for it) hath banished idolatry, and images too, out of our churches: but heart-reformation only can break down mental idolatry, and banish the more subtile and refined imageworship, and representations of the Deity, out of the minds of men. The world, in the time of its darkness, was never more prone to the former, than the unfanctified mind is to the latter. Hence are horrible, monstrous, and mis-shappen thoughts of God, Christ, the glory above, and all spiritual things.

Evid. 4. What a difficult task is it to detain a carnal mind before the Lord! how averse is it to the entertaining of good thoughts, and dwelling in the meditation of spiritual things! if a person be driven, at any time, to think of the great concerns of his foul, it is no harder work to hold in an unruly hungry beaft, than to hedge in the carnal mind, that it get not away to the vanities of the world again. When God is speaking to men by his word, or they are speaking to him in prayer, doth not the mind often leave them before the Lord, like so many idols that have eyes, but fee not, and ears, but hear not? The carcase is laid down before God, but the world gets away the heart: though the eyes be closed, the man sees a thousand vanities: the mind, in the mean time, is like a bird got loose out of the cage, skipping from bush to bush; forthat, in effect, the man never comes to himself till he be gone from the presence of the Lord. Say not, it is impossible to get the mind fixed. It is hard indeed, but not impossible. Grace from the Lord can do it, Pfal. cviii. 1. Agreeable objects will do it. A pleafant

fpeculation will arrest the minds of the inquisitive: the worldly man's mind is in little hazard of wandering, when he is contriving of business, casting up his accounts, or telling his money: if he answers you not at first, he tells you he did not hear you, he was busy; his mind was fixed. Were we admitted into the presence of a king, to petition for our lives, we should be in no hazard of gazing through the chamber of presence. But here lies the case, the carnal mind, employed about any spiritual good, is out of its element, and therefore cannot fix.

Evid. 5. But however hard it is to keep the mind on good thoughts, it sticks as glue to what is evil and corrupt, like itself, 2 Pet. ii. 14. Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin. Their eyes cannot cease from sin (so the words are constructed) that is, their hearts and minds, venting by the eyes what is within, like a surious beast, which cannot be held in when once it has got out its head. Let the corrupt imagination once be let loose on its proper object; it will be found hard work to call it back again, though both reason and will are for its retreat. For then it is in its own element; and to draw it off from its impurities, is as the drawing of a fish out of the water, or the renting of a limb from a man. It runs like fire set to a train of powder, that resteth not till it can get no farther.

Evid. 6. Confider how the carnal imagination supplies the want of real objects to the corrupt heart; that it may make sinners happy, at least, in the imaginary enjoyment of their lusts. Thus the corrupt heart feeds itself with imagination-sins; the unclean person is filled with speculative impurities, having eyes full of adultery, the covetous man fills his heart with the world, though he cannot get his hands sull of it: the malicious person, with delight, acts his revenge within his own breast; the envious man, within his own narrow soul, beholds, with satisfaction, his neighbour laid low; and every lust finds the corrupt imagination a friend to it in time of need. This it doth, not only when people are awake, but sometimes even when they are asseep; whereby it comes to pass, that those sins are

acted in dreams, which their hearts are carried out after while they are awake. I know that some question the finfulness of these things: but can it be thought they are confistent with that holy nature and frame of spirit which was in innocent Adam, and in Jesus Christ, and should be in every man? It is the corruption of nature, then, that makes filthy dreamers condemned, Jude 8. Solomon had experience of the exercise of grace in fleep: in a dream he prayed, in a dream he made the best choice; both were accepted of God, I Kings iii. 5. 15. And if a man may, in his fleep, do what is good and acceptable to God, why may he not also, when asleep, do that which is evil and displeafing to God? The fame Solomon would have men aware of this; and prescribes the best remedy against it, namely, The law upon the heart, Prov. vi. 20, 21. When thou sleepest (says he, ver. 22.) it shall keep thee, to wit, from finning in thy fleep; that is, from finful dreams: for a man's being kept from fin (not his being kept from affliction) is the immediate proper effect of the law of God impressed upon the heart, Psal. cxix. 11. And thus the whole verse is to be understood, as appears from ver. 23. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life. Now the law is a lamp and light, as it guides in the way of duty; and instructing reproofs from the law, are the way of life, as they keep from fin: they do not guide into the way of peace, but as they lead into the way of duty; nor do they keep a man out of trouble, but as they keep him from fin. Remarkable is the particular in which Solomom instanceth, namely, the fin of uncleanness, to keep thee from the evil woman, &c. verse 24. which is to be joined to verse 22. inclosing the 23d in a parenthesis, as some versions have it. These things may suffice to convince us of the natural bias of the mind to evil.

Fourthly, There is in the carnal mind an opposition to spiritual truths, and an aversion to the receiving them. It is as little a friend to divine truths, as it is to holiness. The truths of natural religion, which do, as it were, force their entry into the minds of natural men.

they hold prisoners in unrighteousness, Rom. i. 18. As for the truths of revealed religion, there is an evil heart of unbelief in them, which opposeth their entry; and there is an armed force necessary to captivate the mind to the belief of them, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. God has made a revelation of his mind and will to finners, touching the way of falvation; he has given us the doctrine of his holy word: but do natural men believe it indeed? No, they do not; for he that believeth not on the Son of God, believeth not God, as is plain from 1 John v. 10. They believe not the promises of the word: they look on them, in effect, only as fair words; for those that receive them are thereby made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. The promises are as filver cords let down from heaven, to draw finners unto God, and to waft them over into the promifed land; but they cast them from them. They believe not the threatenings of the word. As men travelling in defarts carry fire about with them, to fright away wild beafts: so God has made his law a fiery law, Deut. xxxiii. 2. hedging it about with threats of wrath: but men naturally are more brutish than beasts themselves; and will needs touch the fiery smoaking mountain, though they should be thrust through with a dart. I doubt not but most, if not all of you, who are yet in the black state of nature, will here plead, Not guilty: But remember, the carnal Jews in Christ's time were as confident as you are, that they believed Moses, John ix. 28, 29. But he confutes their confidence, roundly telling them, John v. 46. Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me. If you believed the truths of God, you durst not reject, as ye do, him who is truth itself. The very difficulty you find in affenting to this truth, discovers that unbelief which I am charging you with. Has it not proceeded fo far with fome at this day, that it has steeled their fore-heads with the impudence and impiety, openly to reject all revealed religion? Surely it is out of the abundance of the heart their mouth speaketh. But, though ye set not your mouths against the heavens, as they do, the same bitter root of unbelief is in all men by nature, and reigns in you, and will reign till overcoming grace brings our minds point, confider these things.

Evidence 1. How few are there who have been bleffed with an inward illumination, by the special operation of the Spirit of Christ, leading them into a view of divine truths in their spiritual and heavenly lustre! How have you learned the truths of religion which you pretend to believe? You have them merely by the benefit of external revelation, and by education; fo that you are Christians, because you were not born and bred in a Pagan, but in a Christian country. You are strangers to the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in your hearts; and fo you cannot have the affurance of faith, with respect to the outward divine revelation made in the word, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, 12. Therefore ye are still unbelievers. It is written in the Prophets, They shall be all taught of God—Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me, fays our Lord, John vi. 45. Now you have not come to Christ, therefore you have not been taught of God: you have not been fo taught, and therefore ye have not come; ye believe not. Behold the revelation from which the faith, even of the fundamental principles in religion doth spring, Mat. xvi. 17, 18. Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God-Blessed art thou Simon Barjonas: for flesh and blood bath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. If ever the Spirit of the Lord take thee in hand, to work in thee that faith which is of the operation of God, it may be as much time will be spent in razing the old foundation, as will make thee find the necessity of the working of his mighty power, to enable thee to believe the very foundation-principles, which now thou thinkest thou makest no doubt of, Eph. i. 19.

Evid. 2. How many professors have made ship-wreck of their faith (such as it was) in time of temptation and trial! See how they fall, like stars from heaven, when antichrist prevails! 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth. They fall into damning delusions; because they never

really believed the truth, though they themselves, and others too, thought they did believe it. That house is built upon the fand, and that faith is but ill-founded, that cannot stand, but is quite overthrown, when the storm comes.

Evid. 3. Confider the utter inconfishency of most men's lives, with the principles of religion which they profess: you may as soon bring East and West together, as their principles and practice. Men believe that fire will burn them, and therefore they will not throw themselves into it: but the truth is, most men live as if they thought the gospel a mere fable, and the wrath of God, revealed in his word against their unrighteousness and ungodliness, a mere scare-crow. If you believe the doctrines of the word, how is it that you are so unconcerned about the state of your souls before the Lord? How is it that you are so little concerned with this weighty point, Whether you be born again or not? Many live as they were born, and are likely to die as they live, and yet live in peace. Do fuch believe the sinfulness and misery of a natural state? Do they believe that they are children of wrath? Do they believe that there is no falvation without regeneration? and no regeneration but what makes man a new creature? If you believe the promises of the word, why do you not embrace them, and feek to enter into the promifed rest? What sluggard would not dig for a hid treasure, if he really believed that he might so obtain it? Men will work and sweat for a maintainance, because they believe that by so doing they shall get it: yet they will be at no tolerable pains for the eternal weight of glory; why, but because they do not believe the word of promise? Heb. iv. 1, 2. If ye believe the threatenings, how is it that ye live in your fins, live out of Christ, and yet hope for mercy? Do such believe God to be the holy and just One, who will by no means clear the guilty? No, no; none believe, none (or next to none) believe what a just God the LORD is, and how feverely he punisheth.

Fifthly, There is in the mind of man a natural proneness to lies and falthood, which make for the

fafety of lusts. They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies, Psal. lvii. 3. We have this with the rest of the corruption of our nature, from our first parents. God revealed the truth to them; but through the follicitation of the tempter, they first doubted, then disbelieved it, and embraced a lie instead of it. For an incontestible evidence hereof, we may see the first article of the devil's creed, Ye shall not surely die, Gen. iii. 4. which was obtruded by him on our first parents, and by them received; naturally embraced by their pofterity, and held fast, till light from heaven oblige them to quit it. It spreads itself through the lives of natural men; who, till their consciences be awakened, walk after their own lusts; still retaining the principle, That they shall not surely die. And this is often improved to fuch perfection, that the man can fay, in the face of the denounced curse, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imaginations of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, Deut. xxix. 19. Whatever advantage the truths of God, have over error, by means of education, or otherwise, error has always, with the natural man, this advantage against truth, namely, that there is something within him which fays, O that it were true; to that the mind lies fair for affenting to it. And here is the reason of it. The true doctrine is the doctrine that is according to godliness, 1 Tim. vi. 3. and the truth which is after godliness, Tit. i. 1. error is the doctrine which is according to ungodliness; for there is never an error in the mind, nor an untruth vented in the world (in matters of religion), but what has an affinity with one corruption of the heart or another: according to that of the apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 12. They believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. So that truth and error being otherwise attended with equal advantages for their reception, error, by this means, has most ready access into the minds of men in their natural state. Wherefore, it is nothing strange that men reject the simplicity of gospel truths and institutions, and greedily embrace error and external pomp in religion; as they are so agreeable to the lusts of the heart, and the vanity of the mind of the natural man. From hence

also it is, that so many embrace atherstical principles; for not any do it but in compliance with their irregular passions: not any but those whose advantage it would

be that there were no God.

Lastly, Man naturally is high-minded; for when the gospel comes in power to him, it is employed in casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, 2 Cor. x. 5. Lowliness of mind is not a flower that grows in the field of nature, but is planted by the finger of God in a renewed heart, and learned of the lowly Jesus. It is natural to man to think highly of himself, and what is his own. For the stroke which he got by his fall in Adam, has produced. a false light, whereby mole-hills about him appear like mountains; and a thousand airy beauties present themselves to his deluded fancy. Vain man would be wife, (so he accounts himself, and so he would be accounted by others) though man be born like a wild ass's colt, Job xi. 12. His way is right, because it is his own: for every way of a man is right in his own eyes, Prov. xxi. 7. His state is good, because he knows not any. better, he his alive without the law, Rom. vii. 9. and therefore his hope is strong, and his confidence firm. It is another tower of Babel reared up against heaven; and it will not fall while the power of darkness can hold it up. The word batters it, yet it stands: one while breaches are made in it, but they are quickly repaired; at another time, it is all made to shake, but still it is kept up, till either God himself by his Spirit raise an heart-quake within the man, which tumbles it down, and leaves not one stone upon another, (2 Cor. x. 4, 5,) or death batter it down, and raze the foundations of it, Luke xvi. 23. And as the natural man thinks highly of himself, so he thinks meanly of God, whatever he pretends, Pfal. l. 21. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether fuch an one as thyfeif. The doctrine of the gospel, and the mystery of Christ, are soolishness to him; and in his practice he treats them as fuch, 1 Cor. i. 18. and ii. 14. He brings the word and the works of God, in the government of the world, before the bar of his carnal reason; and there they are presumptuously censured and

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condemned, Hof. xiv. 9. Sometimes the ordinary reftraint of providence is taken off, and Satan is permitted to stir up the carnal mind: and in that case it is like an ant's nest, uncovered and disturbed; doubts, denials, and hellish reasonings crowd in it, and cannot be laid by all the arguments brought against them, till power from on high subdue the mind, and still the mutiny of

the corrupt principles.

Thus much of the corruption of the understanding; which, although the half be not told, may discover to you the absolute necessity of regenerating grace. Call the understanding now Ichabod; for the glory is departed from it. Consider this, you that are yet in the state of nature, and groan out your case before the Lord, that the Sun of Righteousnels may arise upon you, before you be shut up in everlasting darkness. What avails your worldly wisdom? What do your attainments in religion avail, while your understanding lies wrapt up in its natural darkness and confusion, utterly void of the light of life? Whatever be the natural man's gifts or attainments, we must (as in the case of the leper, Lev. xiii. 41.) pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague is in his head. But that is not all; it is in his heart too, his will is corrupted, as I shall soon shew.

Of the Corruption of the Will.

II. The will, that commanding faculty, (which fometime was faithful, and ruled with God) is now turned traitor, and rules with and for the devil. God planted it in man wholly a right feed; but now it is turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine. It was originally placed in due subordination to the will of God, as was shewn before; but now it is gone wholly aside. However some magnify the power of free will, a view of the spirituality of the law, to which acts of moral discipline in no ways answer, and a deep insight into the corruption of nature, given by the inward operation of the Spirit, convincing of sin, righteousness, and judgement, would make men find an absolute need of the power of free-grace, to remove the bands of wickedaess from off their free-will. To open up this plague

of the heart, I offer these following things to be con-

sidered,

First, There is, in the unrenewed will, utter inability for what is truly good and acceptable in the fight of God. The natural man's will is in Satan's fetters, hemmed in within the circle of evil, and cannot move beyond it, any more than a dead man can raise himself out of his grave, Eph. ii, 1. We deny him not a power to chuse, pursue, and act, what, as to the matter, is good: but though he can will what is good and right, he can will nothing aright and well, John xv. 5. Without me, i. e. separate from me, as a branch from the stock, (as both the word and context will bear) ye can do nothing; to wit, nothing truly and spiritually good. His very choice and defire of spiritual things is carnal and selfish, John vi. 26. Ye feek me—because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. He not only comes not to Christ, but he cannot come, John vi. 44. and what can he do acceptable to God, who believeth not on him whom the Father hath fent? To evidence this inability for good in the unregenerate, confider these two things.

Evidence 1. How often does the light fo shine before men's eyes, that they cannot but see the good which they should chuse, and the evil which they should refuse; and yet their hearts have no more power to comply with that light, than if they were arrested by some invisible hand? They see what is right; yet they follow, and cannot but follow, what is wrong. Their consciences tell them the right way, and approves of it too, yet their will cannot be brought up to it: their corruption so chains them, that they cannot embrace it; fo that they figh and go backward, notwithstanding their light. If it be not thus, how is it that the word, and way of holiness meet with such entertainment in the world? How is it that clear arguments and reason on the fide of piety and a holy life, which feem to have weight even with the carnal mind, do not bring men over to that fide? Although the being of a heaven and a hell were but a may-be, it were sufficient to determine the will to the choice of holiness, were it capable

to be determined thereto by mere reason: but men knowing the judgement of God, (that they who commit fuch things are worthy of death) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them, Rom. i. 32. And how is it that those who magnify the power of free-will, do not confirm their opinion before the world, by an ocular demonstration, in a practice as far above others in holiness, as the opinion of their natural ability is above that of others? Or is it maintained only for protection of lufts, which men may hold fast as long as they please; and when they have no more use for them, throw them off in a moment, and leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom? Whatever use some make of that principle; it does of itself, and in its own nature, caft a broad shadow for a shelter to wickedness of heart and life. It may be observed, that the generality of the hearers of the gospel, of all denominations, are plagued with it: for it is a root of bitterness natural to all men; from whence spring so many fearlesness about the soul's eternal state; fo many delays and put-offs in that weighty matter, whereby much work is laid up for a death-bed by fome; while others are ruined by a legal walk, and unacquaintedness with the life of faith, and the making use of Christ for sanctification; all slowing from the persuasion of sufficient natural abilities. So agréeable is it to corrupt nature.

Evid. 2. Let those who, by the power of the spirit of bondage, have had the law opened before them, in its spirituality, for their conviction, speak and tell, if they found themselves able to incline their hearts toward it, in that case; nay, whether the more that light shone into their souls, they did not find their hearts more and more unable to comply with it! There are some, who have been brought unto the place of the breaking forth, who are yet in the devil's camp, who from their experience can tell, that light let into the mind cannot give life to the will, to enable it to comply therewith; and could give their testimony here, if they would. But take Paul's testimony concerning it, who, in his unconverted state, was far from believing his utter inability for good, but learned it by experi-

ence, Rom. vii. 8—13. I own the natural man may have a kind of love to the letter of the law: but here lies the stress of the matter, he looks on the holy law in a carnal dress; and so, while he hugs a creature of his own fancy, he thinks that he has the law; but in very deed he is without the law: for as yet he sees it not in its spirituality; if he did, he would find it the very reverse of his own nature, and what his will could not fall in with, till changed by the power of grace.

Secondly, There is in the unrenewed will an averseness to good. Sin is the natural man's element; he is as unwilling to part with it, as fish are to come out of the water into dry land. He not only cannot come to Christ, but he will not come, John v. 40. He is polluted, and hates to be washed, Jer. xiii. 27. Will thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? He is sick, yet utterly averse to the remedy: he loves his disease so, that he loathes the Physician. He is a captive, a prisoner, and a slave; but he loves his conqueror, his jailor, and master: he is fond of his setters, prison, and drudgery; and has no liking to his liberty. For evidence of this averseness to good in the will of man,

I will instance in some particulars.

Evidence 1. The untowardness of children. Do we not see them, naturally, lovers of sinful liberty? How unwilling are they to be hedged in? How averse to restraint? The world can bear witness, that they are as bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke: and more, that it is far easier to bring young bullocks tamely to bear the yoke, than to bring young children under discipline, and make them tamely submit to be restrained in sinful liberty. Every body may see in this, as in a glass, that man is naturally wild and wilful, according to Zophar's observation, (Job. xi. 12.) that man is born like a wild ass's colt. What can be said more? He is like a colt, the colt of an ass, the colt of a wild ass. Comp. Jer. ii. 24. A wild ass used to the wilderness, that sousset up the voind at ber pleasure, in her occasion who can turn her away?

Evid. 2. What pain and difficulty men often find in bringing their hearts to religious duties! And what a task is it to the carnal heart to abide at them! It is a

pain to it; to leave the world but a little, to come before God. It is not easy to borrow time from the many things, to spend it upon the one thing needful. Men often go to God in duties, with their faces towards the world; and when their bodies are on the mount of ordinances, their hearts will be found at the foot of the hill, going after their covetousness, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. They are foon wearied of well-doing; for holy duties are not agreeable to their corrupt nature. Take notice of them at their worldly business, set them down with their carnal company, or let them be fucking the breasts of a lust; time seems to them to fly; and drive furiously, so that it is gone ere they are aware. But how heavily does it pass while a prayer, a sermon, or a Sabbath lasts? The Lord's day is the longest day of all the week with many; therefore they must sleep longer that morning, and go fooner to bed that night, than ordinarily they do; that the day may be made of a tolerable length: for their hearts say within them, When will the Sabbath be gone? Amos viii. 5. The hours of worship are the longest hours of that day: hence, when duty is over, they are like men eafed of a burden: and when fermon is ended, many have neither the grace nor the good manners to flay till the bleffing be pronounced, but like the beafts, their head is away as foon as a man puts his hand to loofe them; and why? because while they are at ordinances, they are as Doeg, detained before the Lord, 1 Sam. xxii. 7.

Evid. 3. Confider how the will of the natural man rebels against the light, Job xxiv. 13. Light sometimes entereth in, because he is not able to keep it out; but he loveth darkness rather than light. Sometimes, by the force of truth, the outer-door of the understanding is broke open; but the inner-door of the will remains sast bolted. Then lusts rise against light; corruption and conscience encounter, and fight as in the field of battle; till corruption getting the upper-hand, conscience is forced to turn the back; convictions are murdered; and truth is made and held prisoner, so that it can create no more disturbance. While the word is preached or read, or the rod of God is upon

the natural man, fometimes convictions are darted in on him, and his fpirit is wounded, in greater or leffer measure: but those convictions not being able to make him fall, he runs away with the arrows sticking in his conscience, and at length, one way or other, gets them out, and makes himself whole again. Thus, while the light shines, men, naturally averse to it, wilfully shut their eyes; till God is provoked to blind them judicially, and they become proof against his word and providences too; so go where they will, they can sit at ease: there is never a word from heaven to them, that goeth deeper than into their ears, Hos. iv. 17. Ephraim

is joined to idols, let him alone:

Evid. 4. Let us observe the resistance made by elect fouls, when the Spirit of the Lord is at work, to bring them from the power of Satan unto God. Zion's King gets no subjects but by stroke of sword, in the day of his power, Pfal. cx. 2, 3. None come to him, but fuch as are drawn by the divine hand, John vi. 44. When the Lord comes to the foul, he finds the strong man keeping the house, and a deep peace and security there, while the foul is fast asleep in the devil's arms. But the prey must be taken from the mighty, and the captive delivered. Therefore the Lord awakens the finner, opens his eyes, and strikes him with terror, while the clouds are black above his head, and the fword of vengeance is held to his breast. Now he is at no small pains to put a fair face on a black heart; to shake off his fears, to make head against them, and to divert himself from thinking on the unpleasant and ungrateful subject of his foul's case. If he cannot so rid himself from them, carnal reason is called in to help, and urgeth that there is no ground for fo great fear; all may be well enough yet; and if it be be ill with him, it will be ill with many. When the finner is beat from this, and fees no advantage in going to hell with company, he refolves to leave his fins, but cannot think of breaking off so foon; there is time enough, and he will do it afterwards. Conscience says, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, barden not your hearts: but he cries, To-morrow, Lord; to-morrow, Lord; and just now, Lord; till that now is

never like to come. Thus, many times he comes from his prayers and confessions, with nothing but a breast full of sharper convictions; for the heart doth not always cast up the sweet morsel, as soon as confession is made with the mouth, Judges x. 10—16. And when conscience obligeth them to part with some lusts, others are kept as right eyes and right hands; and there are rueful looks after those that are put away; as it was with the Ifraelites, who, with bitter hearts, remembered the fish they did eat in Egypt freely, Numb. xi. 5. Nay, when he is so pressed, that he must needs say before the Lord, that he is content to part with all his idols, the heart will be giving the tongue the lie. In a word, the foul, in this cafe, will shift from one thing to another; like a fish with the hook in its jaws, till it can do no more, and power come to make it yield, as the wild as in her month, Jer. ii. 24.

Thirdly, There is in the will of man a natural propenfity to evil, a woeful bent toward fin. Men naturally are bent to backfliding from God, Hof. ii. 7. They hang (as the word is) towards backfliding; even as a hanging wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly in an instant. Set holiness and life upon the one side, sin and death upon the other, and leave the unrenewed will to itself, and it will choose sin, and reject holiness. This is no more to be doubted, than that water, poured on the side of a hill, will run downward, and not upward, or that a slame will ascend, and not descend.

Evid. 1. Is not the way of evil the first way which the children of men go? Do not their inclinations plainly appear on the wrong side, while yet they have no cunning to hide them? In the first opening of our eyes in the world, we look a squint, hell-ward, not heaven-ward. As soon as it appears that we are rational creatures, it appears that we are finful creatures, Psal. lviii. 3. The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, Prov. xxii. 15. Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child: but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. Folly is bound in the heart, it is woven in our very nature. The knot will not unloose, it must be broken asunder by

strokes. Words will not do it, the rod must be taken to drive it away: and if it be not driven far away, the heart and it will meet and knit again. Not that the rod of itself will do this: the sad experience of many parents testifies the contrary; and Solomon himself tells you, Prov. xxvii. 22. Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar, among wheat, with a peftle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him. It is so bound in his heart. But the rod is an ordinance of God, appointed for that end; which, like the word, is made effectual, by the Spirit's accompanying his own ordinance. This, by the way, thews that parents, in administering correction to their children, have need, first of all, to correct their own irregular passions; and look upon it as a matter of awful folemnity, fetting about it with much dependence on the Lord, and following it with prayer for a bleffing, if they would have it effectual.

Evid. 2. How easily are men led aside to sin! The children who are not perfuaded to good, are otherwife fimple ones, eafily wrought upon; those whom the word cannot draw to holinels, are ted by Satan at his pleasure. Profane Esau, that cunning man, (Gen. xxv. 27.) was as easily cheated of the blessing, as if he had been a fool or an idiot. The more natural a thing is, the more easy it is: so Christ's yoke is easy to the faints, fo far as they are partakers of the divine nature: and fin is easy to the unrenewed man; but to learn to do good, is as difficult as for the Ethiopian to change his fkin; because the will naturally hangs towards evil, and is averse to good. A child can cause a round thing to run, when he cannot move a spuare thing of the same weight; for the roundness makes it fit for mo. tion, fo that it goes with a touch. Even fo, men find the heart easily carried towards sin, while it is as a dead weight in the way of holiness; we must feek for the reason of this-from the natural set and disposition of the . heart, whereby it is prone and bent to evil. Were man's will, naturally, but in equal balance to good and evil, the one might be embraced with as little difficulty as the other; but experience testifies it is not so. In the facred hiftory of the Israelites, especially in the

book of Judges, how often do we find them forsaking Jehovah, the mighty God, and doting upon the idols of the nations about them! But did ever any one of these nations grow fond of Israel's God, and forsake their own idols? No, no; though man is naturally given to changes, it is but from evil to evil, not from evil to good, Jer. ii. 10, 11. Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Surely the will of man stands not in equal balance, but has a cast to the

wrong fide,

Evid. 3. Confider how men go on still in the way of sin, till they meet with a stop, and that from another hand than their own, Isa. lvii. 17. I hid me, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. If God withdraw his restraining hand, and lay the reins on the sinner's neck, he is under no doubt what way to choose; for (observe it) the way of sin is the way of his heart; his heart naturally lies that way; it hath a natural propensity to sin. As long as God suffereth them, they walk in their own way, Acts xiv. 16. The natural man is so sixed in his woeful choice, that there needs no more to shew he is off from God's way, than to say he is

upon his own.

Evid. 4. Whatever good impressions are made upon him, they do not last. Though his heart be firm as a stone, yea, harder than the nether-milstone, in point of receiving of them; it is otherwise unstable as water, and cannot keep them. It works against the receiving of them; and, when they are made, it works them off, and returns to its natural bias, Hof. vi. 4. Your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew, it goeth away. The morning cloud promifeth a hearty shower, but, when the fun arifeth, it vanisheth: the sun beats upon the early dew, and it evaporates; the husbandman's expectation is disappointed. Such is the goodness of the natural man. Some sharp affliction, or piercing conviction, obligeth him, in some fort, to turn from his evil course: but his will not being renewed, religion is still against the grain with him, therefore this goes off again, Pial. lxxyiii. 34. 36, 37. Though a stone thrown up into.

the air, may abide there a little while: yet its natural heaviness will bring it down to the earth again: so do unrenewed men return to the wallowing in the mire; because, although they washed themselves, yet their swinish nature was not changed. It is hard to cause wet wood to take fire, hard to make it keep fire; but it is harder than either of these, to make the unrenewed will retain attained goodness; which is a plain evidence of the natural bent of the will to evil.

Evid. 5. Do the faints serve the Lord now, as they were wont to serve sin, in their unconverted state? Very far from it, Rom. vi. 20. When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. Sin got all, and admitted no partner: but now, when they are the servants of Christ, are they free from sin? Nay, there are still with them some deeds of the old man, shewing that he is but dying in them, and hence their hearts often misgive them, and slip aside into evil, when they would do good, Rom. vii. 21. They need to watch, and keep their hearts with all diligence; and their sad experience teacheth them, That he that trusteth in his own heart is a sool, Prov. xxviii. 26. If it be thus in the green tree, how

must it be in the dry?

Fourthly, There is a natural contrariety, direct oppolition and enmity, in the will of man, to God himfelf, and his holy will, Rom. viii. 7. The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The will was once God's deputy in the foul, fet to command there for him; but now it is fet up against him. If you would have the picture of it in its natural state, the very reverse of the will of God represents it. If the fruit hanging before one's eyes be but forbidden, that is fufficient to draw the heart after it. Let me instance in the fin of profane swearing and curfing, to which fome are so abandoned, that they take a pride in them; belching out horrid oaths and curses, as if hell opened with the opening of their mouths; or larding their speeches with minced oaths'; and all this without any manner of provocation, though even that would not excuse them. Pray tell me, (1.) What profit is there here in this? A thief gets

fomething in his hand for his pains; a drunkard gets a belly-full; but what do you get? Others ferve the devil for pay; but you are volunteers, that expect no reward, but your work itself in affronting of Heaven; and if you repent not, you will get your reward in full tale: when you go to hell, your work will follow you. The drunkard shall not have a drop of water to cool his tongue there. Nor will the covetous man's wealth follow him into the other world: you may drive on your old trade there: eternity will be long enough to give you your heart's fill of it. (2.) What pleasure is there here, but what flows from your trampling upon the holy law? Which of your fenfes doth swearing and curfing gratify? If it gratify your ears, it can only be by the noise it makes against the heavens. Though you had a mind to give up yourselves to all manner of profanity and fenfuality, there is fo little pleafure can be strained out of these sins, that we must needs conclude, your love to them, in this case, is a love to them for themselves; a devilish unhired love, without any prospect of profit or pleasure from them. If any shall say, These are monsters of men: be it so; yet, alas! the world is fruitful of fuch monsters, that they are to be found almost every where. Allow me to say, they must be admitted as the mouth of the whole unregenerate world against Heaven, Rom. iii. 14. 19. Whose mouth is full of curfing and bitterness. Now we know that what things foever the law faith, it faith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

I have a charge against every unregenerate man and woman, young and old, to be verified by the testimonies of the Scriptures of truth, and the testimony of their own consciences; namely, that whether they be professors or profane, seeing they are not born again, they are heart-enemies to God, to the Son of God, to the Spirit of God, and to the law of God. Hear this, ye careless souls, that live at ease in your natural state.

First, You are enemies to God in your mind, Col.i. 21. You are not as yet reconciled to him; the natural enmity is not as yet flain, though perhaps it lies hid, and you

do not perceive it. (1.) You are enemies to the very being of God, Psal. xiv. 1. The fool hath faid in his heart, There is no God. The proud man would that none were above himself; the rebel, that there were no king; and the unrenewed man, who is a mass of pride and rebellion, that there were no God. He saith in his heart, I wish it were so; though he is ashamed and afraid to speak it out. That all natural men are such fools, appears from the apostle's quoting a part of this Pfalm, That every mouth may be flopped, Rom. iii. 10, 11, 12. 19. I own, indeed, that while the natural man looks on God as the Creator and Preserver of the world, because he loves his own self, therefore his heart riseth not against the being of his Benefactor: but this enmity will quickly appear, when he looks on God as the Rector and Judge of the world, binding him, under the pain of the curse, to exact holiness, and girding him with the cords of death, because of his sin. Listen, in this case, to the voice of the heart, and thou wilt find it to be, No God. (2.) You are enemies to the nature of God, Job xxi. 14. They say unto God, Depart from us: for we defire not the knowledge of thy ways. Men fet up to themselves an idol of their own fancy, instead of God, and then fall down and worthip it. They love him no other way than Jacob loved Leah, while he took her for Rachel. Every natural man is an enemy to God, as he is revealed in his word. The infinitely holy, just, powerful, and true being, is not the God whom he loves, but the God whom he loathes. In fact, men naturally are haters of God, Rom. i. 30. If they could, they certainly would make him otherwise than what he is. For confider, it is a certain truth, that whatsoever is in God, is God; therefore his attributes or perfections are not any thing really distinct from himself. If God's attributes be not God himself, he is a compound being, and so not the first being; (which to fay is blasphemous) for the parts compounding are before the compound itself; but he is Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.

Now upon this I would, for your conviction, propose to your consciences a few queries. (1.) How stand

your hearts affected towards the infinite purity and holiness of God? Conscience will give an answer to this, which the tongue will not speak out. If you be not partakers of his holiness, you cannot be reconciled to it. The Pagans finding that they could not be like God in holiness, make their gods like themselves in filthiness; and thereby discover what fort of a God the natural man would have. God is holy; can an unholy creature love his unspotted holiness? Nay, it is the righteous only, that can give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, Psal. xcvii. 12: God is light; can creatures of darkness rejoice therein? Nay; Every one that doth evil, hateth the light, John iii. 20. For what communion bath light with darkness? 2 Cor. vi. 14. (2.) How stand your hearts affected to the justice of God? There is not a man, who is wedded to his lufts, as all the unregenerate are, but would be content, with the blood of his body, to blot that letter out of the name of God. Can the malefactor love his condemna ing judge? or an unjustified sinner, a just God? No, he cannot, Luke vii. 47. To whom little is forgiven, the fame loveth little. Hence, as men cannot get the doctrine of his justice blotted out of the Bible, it is such an eye-fore to them, that they strive to blot it out of their minds. They ruin themselves by presuming on his mercy; while they are not careful to get a righteousness, wherein they may stand before his justice; but, say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will be do evil, Zeph. i. 12. (3.) How stand you affected to the omniscience and omnipresence of God? Men naturally would rather have a blind idol, than the all-feeing God, therefore they do what they can, as Adam did, to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord. They no more love the all-feeing, everywhere present God, than the thief loves to have the judge witness to his evil deeds. If it could be carried by votes, God would be voted out of the world, and closed up in heaven: for the language of the carnal heart is, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth, Ezek. viii. 12. (4.) How stand you affected to the truth and veracity of God? There are but few

in the world who can heartily subscribe to this sentence of the apostle, Rom. iii. 4. Let God be true, but every man a liar. Nay, truly, there are many, who, in effect, hope that God will not be true to his word. There are thousands who hear the gospel, that hope to be faved, and think all fafe with them for eternity, who hever had any experience of the new birth, nor at all concern themselves in the question, Whether they are born again, or not? A question that is like to wear out from among us' this day. Our Lord's words are plain and peremptory, Except a man be born again, he cannot fee the kingdom of God. What are fuch hopes, then, but real hopes that God (with profoundest reverence be it spoken) will recall his word, and that Christ will prove a false prophet? What else means the sinner, who when he heareth the words of the curse, blesseth himself in his heart, faying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart? Deut. xxix. 19. Lastly, How stand you affected to the power of God? None but new creatures will love him for it, on a fair view thereof; though others may flavishly fear him, upon the account of it. There is not a natural man but would contribute, to the utmost of his power, to the building of another tower of Babel, to hem it in. On these grounds, I declare every unrenewed man an enemy to

Secondly, You are enemies to the Son of God. That enmity to Christ is in your hearts, which would have made you join the husbandmen, who killed the heir, and cast him out of the vineyard; if you had been beset with their temptations, and no more restrained than they were. Am I a dog, you will say, that I should so treat my sweet Saviour? So did Hazael ask, in another case; but when he had the temptation, he was a dog to do it. Many call Christ their sweet Saviour, whose consciences can bear witness that they never sucked so much sweetness from him as from their sweet lusts, which are ten times sweeter to them than the Saviour. He is no other way sweet to them, than as they abuse his death and sufferings, for the peaceable enjoyment of their lusts, that they may live as they please in the world;

and when they die, be kept out of hell. Alas! it is but a mistaken Christ that is-sweet to you, whose souls loath that Christ who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. It is with you as it was with the carnal Jews, who delighted in him, while they mistook his errand into the world, fancying that he would be a temporal deliverer to them, Mal. ii. 1. But when he sat as a refiner and purifier of silver, ver. 2, 3. and rejected them as reprobate silver, who thought to have had no small honour in the kingdom of the Messiah, his doctrine galled their consciences, and they had no rest till they imbrued their hands in his blood. To open your eyes in this point, which you are so averse to believe, I will lay before you the enmity of your hearts against Christ in all his offices.

First, Every unregenerate man is an enemy to Christ in his prophetical office. He is appointed of the Father the great Prophet and Teacher; but not upon the call of the world, who, in their natural state, would have unanimously voted against him: therefore, when he came, he was condemned as a seducer and blasphemer. For evidence of this enmity, I will instance in two

things.

Evidence 1. Confider the entertainment which he meets with when he comes to teach fouls inwardly by his Spirit. Men do what they can to stop their ears, like the deaf adder, that they may not hear his voice. They always resist the Holy Ghost. They desire not the knowledge of his ways; and therefore bid him depart from them. The old calumny is often raised upon him on that occasion, John x. 20. He is mad, why hear ye him? Soul-exercise, raised by the spirit of bondage, is accounted, by many, nothing else but distraction, and melancholy sits; men thus blaspheming the Lord's work, because they themselves are beside themselves, and cannot judge of these matters.

Evid. 2. Confider the entertainment which he meets with, when he comes to teach men outwardly by his word.

1. His written word, the Bible, is flighted: Christ hath left it to us, as the book of our instruction, to shew us what way we must steer our course, if we go to

Immanuel's land. It is a lamp to light us through a dark world, to eternal light: and he hath enjoined us to fearch it with that diligence wherewith men dig into mines for filver and gold, John v. 39. But, ah! how is this facred treasure profaned by many! They ridicule that holy word, by which they must be judged at the last day; and will rather lose their souls than their jest, dressing up the conceits of their wanton wits in Scripture phrases: in which they act as mad a part, as one who would dig into a mine, to procure metal, to melt and pour down his own and his neighbour's throat. Many exhaust their spirits in reading romances, and their minds purfue them, as the flame doth the dry stubble; while they have no heart for, nor relish to the holy word, and therefore feldom take a Bible in their hands. What is agreeable to the vanity of their minds, is pleafant and taking: but what recommends holiness, to their unholy hearts, makes their spirits dull and flat. What pleasure they find, in reading a profane ballad or story book, to whom the Bible is tastelefs, as the white of an egg! Many lav by their Bibles with their Sabbath-days cloaths, and whatever use they have for their cloaths, they have none for their Bibles, till the return of the Sabbath. Alas! the dust or the finery about your Bibles, is a witness now, and will, at the last day, be a witness of the enmity of your hearts against Christ, as a Prophet. Besides all this, among those who usually read the Scripture, how few are there that read it as the word of the Lord to their fouls, and keep up communion with him in it! They do not make his statutes their counsellors, nor doth their particular case send them to their Bibles. They are strangers to the solid comfort of the Scriptures. And when they are dejected, it is fomething else than the word that revives them; as Ahab was cured of his fullen fit, by the securing of Naboth's vineyard for him.

2. Christ's word preached is despised. The entertainment which most of the world, to whom it is come, have always given it, is that which is mentioned, Mat. xxii. 5. They made light of it. And for his sake they are despised whom he employs to preach it; what?

ever other face men put upon their contempt of the ministry, John xv. 20, 21. The servant is not greater than the Lord: if they have perfecuted me, they will also perfecute you: if they have kept my faying, they will keep your's aljo. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake. That Levi was the son of the bated, seems not to have been without a mystery, which the world, in all ages, hath unriddled. But though the earthen vessels, wherein God has put the treasure, be turned, with many, into vefiels wherein there is no pleasure; yet why is the treafure itself flighted? But flighted it is, and that with a witness, this day. Lord, who hath believed our report? To whom shall we speak? Men can, without remorfe, make to themselves silent Sabbaths, one after another. And alas! when they come to ordinances, for the most part, it is but to appear (or, as the word is, to be feen) before the Lord-; and to tread his courts; namely, as a company of beafts would do, if they were driven into them, Ifa. i. 12. So little reverence and awe of God appear on their spirits. Many stand like brazen walls before the word, in whose corrupt conversation the preaching of the word makes no breach. Nay, not a few are growing worse and worse, under precept upon precept; and the refult of all is, They go and fall backward, and are broken, and fnared, and taken, Ifa. xxviii. 13. What tears of blood are sufficient to lament that (the gospel) the grace of God is thus received in vain! We are but the voice of one crying; the Speaker is in heaven, and fpeaks to you from heaven by men: why do you refuse him that speaketh? Heb. xii. 25. God has made our Master heir of all things, and we are fent to court a spouse for him. There is none so worthy as he; none more unworthy than they to whom this match is proposed: but the prince of darkness is preferred before the Prince of Peace. A difinal darknefs overclouded the world by Adam's fall, more terrible than if the fun, moon, and stars, had been for ever wrapped up in blackness of darkness; and there. we should have eternally lain, had not this grace of the gospel, as a shining sun, appeared to dispel it, Tit. ii. 11. Yet we fly like night-owls from it; and like

the wild beafts, lay ourselves down in our dens, when the sun ariseth. We are struck blind with the light thereof; and as creatures of darkness, love darkness rather than light. Such is the enmity of the hearts of men

against Christ, in his prophetical office.

Secondly, The natural man is an enemy to Christ in his priestly office. He is appointed of the Father a Priest for ever; that by his alone facrifice and intercession, sinners may have peace with, and access to, God: but Christ crucified is a stumbling-block, and foolishness, to the unrenewed part of mankind, to whom he is preached, I Cor. i. 23. They are not for him, as the new and living way. Nor is he, by the voice of the world, an High-priest over the house of God.

Corrupt nature goes quite another way to work.

Evidence 1. Not any of Adam's children naturally incline to receive the bleffing in borrowed robes; but would always, according to the spider's motto, owe all to themselves; and so climb up to heaven on a thread spun out of their own bowels: for they desire to be under the law, Gal. iv. 21. and go about to establish their own righteousness, Rom. x. 3. Man naturally looks on God as a great Master, and himself as his servant, that must work, and win heaven as his wages. Hence, when conscience is awakened, he thinks, that to the end he may be saved, he must answer the demands of the law; serve God as well as he can, and pray for mercy wherein he comes short. Thus many come to duties, that never come out of them to Jesus Christ.

Evid. 2. As men naturally think highly of their duties, which feem to them to be well done; so they look for acceptance with God, according as their work is done, not according to the share they have in the blood of Christ. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou feest not? They value themselves on their performances and attainments; yea, their very opinions in religion, (Phil. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7.) taking to themselves what they

rob from Christ, the great High-priest.

Evid. 3. The natural man, going to God in duties, will always be found either to go without a Mediator, or with more than the one only Mediator, Jefus Christ.

Nature is blind, and therefore venturesome: it sets men a-going immediately to God without Christ; to rush into his presence, and put their petitions in his hand, without being introduced by the Secretary of heaven, or putting their requests into his hand. So fixed is this disposition in the unrenewed heart, that when many hearers of the gospel are conversed with, upon the point of their hopes of falvation, the name of Christ will fcarcely be heard from their mouths. Ask them how they think to obtain the pardon of fin; they will tell you, they beg and look for mercy, because God is a merciful God; and that is all they have to confide in. Others look for mercy for Christ's sake: but how do they know that Christ will take their plea in hand? Why, as the Papists have their mediators with the Mediator, so have they. They know he cannot but do it; for they pray, confess, mourn, and have great defires, and the like: and so have something of their own to commend them unto him: they were never made poor in spirit, and brought empty handed to Christ, to lay the stress of all on his atoning blood.

Thirdly, The natural man is an enemy to Christ in his kingly office. The Father hath appointed the Mediator King in Zion, Psal. ii. 6. All to whom the gospel comes are commanded, on their highest peril, to kis the Son, and submit themselves unto him, ver. 12. But the natural voice of mankind is, Away with him, as you may see, ver. 2, 3. They will not have him to

reign over them, Luke xix. 14.

Evidence 1. The workings of corrupt nature, to wrest the government out of his hands. No sooner was he born, but, being born a king, Herod persecuted him, Mat. ii. And when he was crucified, they set up over bis bead his accusation veritten, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews, Mat. xxvii. 37. Though his kingdom be a spiritual kingdom, and not of this world, yet they cannot allow him a kingdom within a kingdom, which acknowledgeth no other head or supreme, but the royal Mediator. They make bold with his royal prerogatives, changing his laws, institutions, and ordinances; modelling his worship according to the devices of their

own hearts; introducing new offices and officers into his kingdom, not to be found in the book of the manner of his kingdom; disposing of the external government thereof as may best suit their carnal designs. Such is the enmity of the hearts of men against Zion's King.

Evid. 2. How unwilling are men naturally to submit unto, and be hedged in, by the laws and discipline of his kingdom! As a King, he is a law-giver, (Ifa. xxxiii 22.) and has appointed an external government, discipline and censures, to controul the unruly, and to keep his professed subjects in order, to be exercised by officers of his own appointment, Matt. xviii. 17, 18. 1 Cor. xx. 28. 1 Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 17. But these are the great eye-fores of the carnal world, who love finful liberty, and therefore cry out, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords away from us, Pial. ii. 2. Hence this work is found to be, in a special manner, a striving against the stream of corrupt nature; which, for the most part, puts such a face on the church, as if there were no king in Israel, every one doing that

which is right in his own eyes.

Evid. 3. However natural men may be brought to feign submission to the King of faints, yet lusts always retain the throne and dominion in their hearts, and they are ferving divers lusts and pleasures, Tit. iii. 3. None but those in whom Christ is formed, really put the crown on his head, and receive the kingdom of Christ within them. His crown is the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espoufals. Who are they, whom the power of grace has not subdued, that will allow him to fet up and to put down in their fouls as he will? Nay, as for others, any lord shall sooner get the rule over them, than the lord of glory: they kindly entertain his enemies, but will never absolutely refign themselves to his government, till conquered in a day of power. Thus you may fee, that the natural man is an enemy to Jesus Christ, in all his offices.

But O how hard it is to convince men in this point! They are very loath to take it up. And, in a special manner, the enmity of the heart against Christ, in his priestly office, seems to be hid from the view of most

of the hearers of the gospel. There appears to be a peculiar malignity in corrupt nature against that officeof his. It may be observed, that the Socinians, those enemies of our bleffed Lord, allow him to be properly a Prophet and a King, but deny him to be properly a Priest. And this is agreeable enough to the corruption of our nature; for, under the covenant of works, the Lord was known as a Prophet or Teacher, and also as a King or Ruler; but not at all as a Priest: so man knows nothing of the mystery of Christ, as the way to the Father, till it be revealed to him. And when it is revealed, the will rifeth up against it; for corrupt nature lies cross to the mystery of Christ, and the great contrivance of falvation through the crucified Saviour, revealed in the gospel. For clearing of which weighty truths, let these four things be considered.

First, The soul's falling in with the grand scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ, and setting the matters of salvation on that sooting before the Lord, is declared by the Scriptures of truth to be an undoubted mark of a real saint, who is happy here, and shall be happy hereafter, Mat. xi. 6. Blessed is he whosever shall not be offended in me. I Cor. i. 23, 24. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the fews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks soolishness: but unto them which are called, both fews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Phil. iii. 3. For we are the circumcission, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no considence in the sless. Now how could this be, if nature could comply with that grand scheme?

Secondly, Corrupt nature is the very reverse of the gospel plan. In the gospel, God proposeth Jesus Christ as the great means of re-uniting man to himself: he has named him as the Mediator, one in whom he is well-pleased, and will have none but him, Mat. xvii. 5. But nature will have none of him, Psal. lxxi. 11. God appointed the place of meeting for the reconciliation, namely, the slesh of Christ; accordingly, God was in Christ, (2 Cor. v. 12.) as the tabernacle of meeting, to make up the peace with sinners: but natural men, though they should die for ever, will not come to Christ,

John v. 40. Te will not come to me, that ye may have life. In the way of the gospel, the sinner must stand before the Lord in imputed righteousness; therefore, so far as natural men follow after righteousness, they follow after the law of righteousness. Rom. xi. 31, 32. and not after the Lord our righteousness. Nature is always for building up itself, and to have some ground for boasting: but the great design of the gospel is to exalt grace, to depress nature, and exclude boasting, Rom. iii. 17. The sum of our natural religion is, to do good from and for ourselves, John v. 44. The sum of gospel religion is, to deny ourselves, and to do good from and for

Christ, Phil. i. 21.

Thirdly, Every thing in nature is against believing in Jesus Christ. What beauty can the blind man discern in the crucified Saviour, for which he is to be defired? How can the will, naturally impotent, yea, and averse to good, make choice of him? Well may the foul then fay to him, in the day of the spiritual siege, as the Jebusites said to David in another case, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither, 2 Sam. v. 6. The way of nature is to go into one's felf for all; according to the fundamental maxim of unfanctified morality, that a man should trust in himself; which, according to the doctrine of faith, is mere foolishness: for so it is determined, Prov. xviii. 26. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool. Now faith is the foul's going out of itself for all: and this nature, on the other hand, determines to be foolishness, 1 Cor. i. 18. 23. Wherefore, there is need of the working of mighty power, to cause sinners to believe, Eph. i. 19. Isa. liii. 1. We see the promises of welcome to sinners, in the gospel covenant, are ample, large, and free, clogged with no conditions, Ifa.lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. If they cannot believe his bare word, he has given them his oath upon it, Ezek. xxxiii 11. and, for their greater affurance, he has annexed feals to his fworn covenant, namely the holy facraments. So that no more could be demanded of the most faithless person in the world, to make us believe him, than the Lord hath condescended to give us, to make us believe himself. This

plainly speaks nature to be against believing, and those who slee to Christ for a refuge, to have need of strong consolation, (Heb. vi. 18.) to balance their strong doubts, and propensity to unbelief. Farther, also, it may be observed, how, in the word sent to a secure graceless generation, their objections are answered before-hand: and words of grace are heaped, one upon another, as you may read, Isa. lv. 7, 8, 9. Joel ii. 13. Why? Because the Lord knows, that when these secure sinners are throughly awakened, doubts, fears, and carnal reasonings against believing, will be getting into their breasts, as thick as dust in the house, raised by sweeping

a dry floor.

Lastly, Corrupt nature is bent towards the way of the law, or covenant of works; and every natural man, so far as he sets himself to seek after salvation, is engaged in that way, and will not quit it, till beat from it by divine power. Now the way of salvation by works, and that of free grace in Jesus Christ, are contrary, Rom. xi. 6. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work, Gal. iii 12. And the law is not of saith; but the man that doth them shall live in them. Wherefore, if the will of man naturally incline to the way of salvation by the law, it lies cross to the gospel plan. And that such is the natural bent of our hearts will appear, if these following things be considered,

1. The law was Adam's covenant; and he knew no other, as he was the head and representative of all mankind, that were brought into it with him, and left under it by him, though without strength to perform the condition thereof. Hence, this covenant is interwoven with our nature; and though we have lost our father's strength, yet we still incline to the way he was set upon, as our head and repelentative in that covenant; that is, by doing, to live. This is our natural religion, and the principle which men naturally take for granted. Mat. xix. 16. What good thing shall I do, that I may have

eternal life.

2. Consider the opposition that has always been made in the world, against the doctrine of free grace in Jesus

Christ, by men setting up for the way of works; thereby discovering the natural tendency of the heart. It is manifest, that the great design of the gospel plan is to exalt the free grace of God in Jesus Christ, Rom. iv. 16. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace. See Eph. i. 6. and chap. ii. 7. All gospel-truths centre in Christ: so that to learn the truth, is to learn Christ, Eph. iv. 20. And to be truly taught it, is to be taught. as the truth is in Jesus, ver. 21. All dispensations of grace and favour from heaven, whether to nations or particular persons, have still had something about them proclaiming the freedom of grace; as in the very first separation made by the divine favour, Cain, the elder brother, is rejected, and Abel, the younger, accepted. This shines through the whole history of the Bible: but, as true it is, this has been the point principally opposed by corrupt nature. One may well fay, that, of all errors in religion, fince Christ the feed of the woman was preached, this of works, in opposition to free grace in him, was the first that lived, and, it is likely, will be the last that dies. There have been vast numbers of errors, which sprung up one after another, whereof, at length, the world became ashamed and weary; fo that they died away. But this has continued from Cain, the first author of this herefy, unto this day; and never wanted fome that clave to it, even in the times of greatest light. I do not, without ground, call Cain the author of it, who when Abel brought a facrifice of atonement, a bloody offering of the firstlings of his flock (like the Publican, finiting on his breaft, and faying, God be merciful to me a sinner), advanced with his thank-offering of the fruit of the ground, (Gen. iv. 3, 4.) like the proud Pharifee, with his God, I thank thee. For what was the cause of Cain's wrath, and of his murdering Abel? Was it not, that he was not accepted of God for his work? Gen. iv. 4, 5. And wherefore flew he him? because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous, (1 John iii. 12.) that is, done in faith, and accepted, when his were done without faith, and therefore rejected, as the apostle teacheth, Heb. xi. 4 So he wrote his indignation against justification

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and acceptance with God, through faith, in opposition to works, in the blood of his brother, to convey it down to posterity. And fince that time, the unbloody facrifice has often swimmed in the blood of those that rejected it. The promise made to Abraham, of the feed in which all nations should be blessed, was so overclouded among his posterity in Egypt, that the generality of them law no need of that way of obtaining the bleffing, till God himself confuted their error, by a fiery law from mount Sinai; which was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, Gal. iii. 19. need not infift in telling you, how Moses and the Prophets had still much to do, to lead the people off the conceit of their own righteousness. The ninth chapter of Deuteronomy is intirely spent on that purpose. They were very gross in that point in our Saviour's time: in the time of the apostles, when the doctrine of free grace was most clearly preached, that error lifted up its head in the face of the clearest light; witness the epistles to the Romans and Galatians. And fince that time it has not been wanting; Popery being the common fink of former herefies, and the heart and life of that delufion. And, finally, it may be observed, that always as the church declined from her purity otherwise, the doctrine of free grace was obscured proportionably.

3. Such is the natural propenfity of man's heart to the way of the law, in opposition to Christ; that, as the tainted veffel turns the tafte of the purest liquor put into it, so the natural man turns the very gospel into law, and transforms the covenant of grace into a covenant of works. The ceremonial law was to the Jews a real gospel; which held blood, death, and translation of guilt, before their eyes continually, as the only way of falvation; yet their very table, (i. e. their altar, with the several ordinances pertaining thereto, Mal. i. 12.) was a snare unto them, Rom. ii. o. while they used it to make up the defects in their obedience to the moral law; and clave to it fo, as to reject him whom the altar and facrifices pointed them to, as the substance of all: even as Hagar, whose duty was only to serve, was by their father brought into her mistress's bed; not without a mystery in the purpose of God, for these are the two covenants, Gal. iv. 24. Thus is the doctrine of the gospel corrupted by Papists, and other enemies to the doctrine of free grace. And, indeed, however natural men's heads may be set right in this point, as surely as they are out of Christ, their faith, repentance, and obedience (such as they are), are placed by them in the room of Christ and his righteousness, and so trusted to, as if by these they sulfilled a new law.

4. Great is the difficulty, in Adam's fons, of their parting with the law as a covenant of works. None part with it, in that respect, but those whom the power of the Spirit of grace separates from it. The law is our first husband, and gets every one's virgin love. When Christ comes to the soul, he finds it married to the law; so as it neither can nor will be married to another, till it be obliged to part with the first husband, as the apostle teacheth, Rom. vii. 1—4. That you may see what

fort of a parting this is, consider,

(1.) It is a death, Rom. vii. 4. Gal. ii. 19. Intreaties will not prevail with the foul here; it faith to the first husband, as Ruth to Naomi, The Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. Here finners are true to their word; they die to the law, ere they be married to Christ. Death is hard to every body: but what difficulty do you imagine must a loving wife, on her death-bed, find in parting with her husband, the husband of her youth, and with the dear children she has brought forth to him? The law is that husband; all the duties performed by the natural man are these children. What a struggle, as for life, will be in the heart before they be parted? I may have occasion to touch upon this afterwards. In the mean time, take the apostle's short but pithy description of it, Rom. x. 3. For they being ignorant of God's rightconfness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. They go about to establish their own righteoutness, like an eager disputant in schools, seeking to establish the point in question; or like a tormentor, extorting a confession from one upon the rack. They go about to establish

it, to make it stand: their righteousness is like a house built upon the fand, it cannot ftand; but they would have it stand: it falls, they set it up again; but still it tumbles down on them; yet they cease not to go about to make it stand. But wherefore all this pains about a tottering righteousness? Because, such as it is, it is their own. What fets them against Christ's righteousness? Why, that would make them free grace's debtors for all: and that is what the proud heart can by no means submit to. Here lies the stress of the matter, Pfal. x. 4. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not feek (to read it without the supplement); that is, in other terms, He cannot dig, and to beg be is asbamed. Such is the struggle ere the foul die to the law, But, what speaks yet more of this woful disposition of the heart, nature oft-times gets the mastery of the disease; in-fo-much that the foul, which was like to have died to the law, while convictions were sharp and piercing, fatally recovers of the happy and promising sickness; and (what is natural) cleaves more closely than ever to the law, even as a wife, brought back from the gates of death, would cleave to her husband. This is the issue of the exercises of many about their soul's case: they are indeed brought to follow duties more closely; but they are as far from Christ as ever, if not farther.

(2.) It is a violent death, Rom. vii. 4. Ye are become dead to the law, being killed, flain, or put to death, as the word bears. The law itself has a great hand in this; the husband gives the wound, Gal. ii. 19. I, through the law, am dead to the law. The foul that dies this death, is like a loving wife matched with a rigorous husband. She does what she can to please him, yet he is never pleased, but tosseth, harasseth, and beats her, till she breaks her heart, and death sets her free; as will afterwards more fully appear. Thus it is made evident, that men's hearts are naturally bent to the way of the law, and lie cross to the gospel method: and the second article of the charge, against you that are unregenerate, is verified, namely, that you are

enemies to the Son of God.

Thirdly, You are enemies to the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit of holiness: the natural man is unholy,

and loves to be so, and therefore resists the Holy Ghost, Acts vii. 51. The work of the Spirit is to convince the world of fin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, John xvi. 8. But O how do men strive to ward off these convictions, as much as they would ward off a blow threatening the lofs of a right eye, or a right hand! If the Spirit of the Lord dart them in, so that they cannot avoid them, the heart fays, in effect, as Ahab to Elijah, whom he both hated and feared, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy! And, indeed, they treat him as an enemy, doing their utmost to stifle convictions, and to murder these harbingers, that come to prepare the Lord's way into the foul. Some fill their hands with business, to put their convictions out of their heads; as Cain, who fet about building a city: some put them off with delays and fair promises, as Felix did: some will fport them away in company, and some sleep them away. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of fanctification; whose work is to subdue lusts, and burn up corruption: how then can the natural man, whose lusts are to him as his limbs, yea, as his life, fail of being an enemy to him?

Lastly, You are enemies to the law of God. Though the natural man defires to be under the law, as a covenant of works; choosing that way of salvation, in opposition to the mystery of Christ: yet, as it is a rule of life to him, requiring univerfal holinefs, and forbidding all manner of impurity, he is an enemy to it; is not fubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, Rom. viii. 7. for, (1.) There is no unrenewed man who is not wedded to some one lust or another, which his heart can by no means part with. Now that he cannot bring up his inclinations to the holy law, he would fain have the law brought down to his inclinations: a plain evidence of the enmity of the heart against it. Therefore to delight in the law of God, after the inward man, is proposed in the word as a mark of a gracious foul, Rom. vii. 22. Pfal. i. 2. It is from this natural enmity of the heart against the law, that all the Pharifajcal gloffes upon it have arifen; whereby the commandment, which is in itself exceeding broad,

has been made very narrow, to the intent it might be the more agreeable to the natural disposition of the heart. (2.) The law laid home on the natural conscience, in its spirituality, irritates corruption. The nearer it comes, nature riseth the higher against it. In that case, it is as oil to the fire, which, instead of quenching it, makes it slame the more: when the commandment came, fin revived, says the apostle, Rom. vii. 9. What reason can be affigned for this, but the natural enmity of the heart against the holy law? Unmortised corruption, the more it is opposed, the more it rageth. Let us conclude, then, that the unregenerate are heart-enemies to God, his Son, his Spirit, and his law; that there is a natural contrariety, opposition, and enmity, in the will of man, to God himself, and his

holy will.

Fifthly, There is, in the will of man, contumacy against the Lord. Man's will is naturally wilful in an evil courfe: he will have his will, though it should ruin him. It is with him as with the Leviathan, (Job. xli. 29. Darts are counted as stubble, he laugheth at the shaking of a spear. The Lord calls to him by his word; fays to him, (as Paul to the jailor, when he was about to kill himself) Do thyself no harm; sinner, why will you die? Ezek. xvii. 31. But they will not hearken; Every one turneth to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle, Jer. viii. 6. We have a promise of life, in the form of a command, Prov. iv. 4. Keep my commandments, and live: it speaks impenitent sinners to be selfdestroyers, wilful self-murderers. They transgress the command of living; as though a man's fervant should wilfully starve himself to death, or greedily drink a cup of poison, which his master commands him to forbear: even fo do they; they will not live, they will die, Prov. viii. 36. All they that hate me love death. O what a heart is this! It is a stony heart, (Ezek. xxxvi. 26.) hard and inflexible as a stone: mercies melt it not, judgments break it not; yet it will break ere it bow. It is an infensible heart: though there be upon the sinner a weight of fin, which makes the earth to stagger; although there is a weight of that wrath on him,

which makes the devils tremble, yet he goes lightly under the burden, he feels not the weight, any more than a stone would, till the Spirit of the Lord quickens him so far as to feel it.

Lastly, The unrenewed will is wholly perverse, in reference to man's chief and highest end. The natural man's chief end is not God, but himself. The being of man is merely relative, dependent, and derived. He has neither being nor goodness originally from himself; but all he hath is from God, as the first cause and spring of all perfection, natural or moral: dependence is woven into his very nature; fo that, if God were totally to withdraw from him, he would dwindle into nothing. Seeing, then, whatever man is, he is of him; furely, in whatever he is, he should be to him; as the waters which come from the sea, do of course return thither again. Thus man was created, directly looking to God as his chief end. But, falling into fin, he fell off from God, and turned into himself; and, like a traitor usurping the throne, he gathers in the rents of the crown to himself. This infers a total apostaly, and universal corruption in man; for where the chief and last end is changed, there can be no goodness there. This is the case of all men in their natural state, Psal. xiv. 2, 3: The Lord looked down - to fee if there were any that did-feek God: They are all gone aside, to wit, from God; they feek not God, but themselves. Though many fair shreds of morality are to be found amongst them, yet there is none that doth good, no, not one; for though fome of them, in appearance, run well, yet they are still off the way; they never aim at the right mark: they are lovers of their own selves more than God, 2 Tim. iii. 2. 4. Wherefore, Jesus Christ having come into the world to bring men back to God again, came to bring them out of themselves in the first place, Mat. xvi. 24. The godly groan under this woful disposition of the heart: they acknowledge it, and fet themselves against it in its subtile and dangerous infinuations. The unregenerate, though most insensible of it, are under the power thereof; and whitherfoever they turn themselves, they cannot move beyond the circle of self:

they feek themselves, they act for themselves; their natural, civil, and religious actions, from whatever springs they come, all run into, and meet in, the dead fea of felf. Most men are so far from making God their chief end, in their natural and civil actions, that, in these matters, God is not in all their thoughts. Their eating and drinking, and fuch like natural actions, are for themselves, their own pleasure or necessity, without any higher end, Zech. vii. 6. Did ye not eat for yourfelves? They have no eye to the glory of God in these things, as they ought to have, I Cor. x. 31. They do not eat and drink, to keep up their bodies for the Lord's fervice; they do them not because God has said, Thou *shalt not kill*: neither do those drops of sweetness, which God has put into the creature, raife up their fouls towards that ocean of delights that are in the Creator; though they are a fign, hung out at heaven's door, to tell men of the fulness of goodness that is in God himfelf, Acts xiv. 17. But it is felf, and not God, that is fought in them by natural men. And what are the unrenewed man's civil actions, fuch as buying, felling, working, &c. but fruit to himself? Hos. x. 1. So, marrying, and giving in marriage, are reckoned amongst the fins of the old world, (Mat. xxiv. 38.) for they had no eye to God therein, to please him; but all they had in view was, to please themselves, Gen. vi. 3. Finally, felf is natural men's highest end in their religious actions. They perform duties for a name, Mat. vi. 1, 2. or some other worldly interest, John vi. 26. Or, if they be more refined, it is their peace, and, at most, their falvation from hell and wrath, or their own eternal happiness, that is their chief and highest end, Mat. xix. 16—22. Their eyes are held, that they fee not the glory of God. They feek God, indeed, but not for himself, but for themselves: they seek him not at all, but for their own welfare: fo their whole life is woven into one web of practical blasphemy; making God the means, and self their end, yea, their chief end.

Thus I have given you fome rude draught of man's will, and his natural state, drawn by Scripture, and men's own experience. Call it no more Naomi, but

Marah; for bitter it is, and a root of bitterness. Call it no more free-will, but flavish lust; free to evil, but free from good, till regenerating grace unloose the bands of wickedness. Now, since all must be wrong, and nothing can be right, where the understanding and will are so corrupt, I shall briefly dispatch what remains, as following of course, on the corruption of the prime saculties of the soul; viz.

The Corruption of the Affections, the Conscience, and the Memory. The Body Partaker of this Corruption.

III. The affections are corrupted. The unrenewed man's affections are wholly disordered and distempered: they are as the unruly horse, that either will not receive, or violently runs away with the rider. So man's heart, naturally is a mother of abominations, Mark vii. 21, 22. For from within, out of the heart of man proceed evilthoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetoufness, &c. The natural man's affections are wretchedly, misplaced; he is a spiritual monster. His heart is where his feet thould be, fixed on the earth; his heels are lifted up against heaven, which his heart should be fet on, Acts ix. 5 His face is towards hell, his back towards heaven; and therefore God calls to him to turn. He loves what he should hate, and hates what he should love; joys in what he ought to mourn for, and mourns for what he should rejoice in; glorieth in his shame, and is ashamed of his glory; abhors what he should defire, and defires what he should abhor, Prov. ii. 13, 14, 15. They hit the point, indeed (as Caiphas did in another case), who cried out against the apostles, asmen that turned the world upfide down; for that is the work which the gospel has to do in the world, where fin has put all things so out of order, that heaven lies under, and earth a-top. If the unrenewed affectionsbe fet on lawful objects, then they are either excessive, or defective. Lawful enjoyments of the world have sometimes too little, but mostly too much of them: Either they get not their due, or, if they do, it is meafure pressed down, and running over. Spiritual things

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have always too little of them. In a word, they are

never right; only evil.

Now here is a three-fold cord, against heaven and holiness, not easily broken; a blind mind, a perverse will, and disorderly distempered affections. The mind, swelled with self-conceit, says, the man should not stoop; the will, opposite to the will of God, says, he will not; and the corrupt affections, rising against the Lord, in defence of the corrupt will, say, he shall not. Thus the poor creature stands out against God and goodness, till a day of power come, in which he is made a new creature.

Fourthly, The conscience is corrupt and defiled, Tit. i. 15. It is an evil eye, that fills one's conversation with much darkness and confusion; being naturally unable to do its office; till the Lord, by letting in new light to the foul, awaken the conscience, it remains fleepy and inactive. Conscience can never do its work, but according to the light it hath to work by. Wherefore, feeing the natural man cannot spiritually discern fpiritual things, (1 Cor. ii. 14.) the conscience naturally is quite useless in that point; being cast into such a deep fleep, that nothing but faving illumination from the Lord can fet it on work in that matter. The light of the natural conscience, in good and evil, fin and duty, is very defective: therefore, though it may check for groffer fins, yet, as to the more fubtile workings of fin, it cannot check for them, because it discerns them not. Thus, conscience will fly in the face of many, if at any time they be drunk, fwear, neglect prayer, or be guilty of any gross sin; who otherwise have a profound peace, though they live in the fin of unbelief, and are firangers to spiritual worship, and the life of Natural light, being but faint and languishing, in many things which it doth reach, conscience, in that case, shoots like a stitch in one's side, which quickly goes off; its incitements to duty, and checks for, and struggles against sin, are very remiss, which the natural man eafily gets over. But because there is a false light in the dark mind, the natural conscience following the fame, will call evil good, and good evil,

Isa. v. 20. So it is often found like a furious and blind horse, which violently runs down himself, his rider, and all that come in his way, John xvi. 2. Whosever killeth you, will think that he doth God service. When the natural conscience is awakened by the Spirit of conviction, it will indeed rage and roar, and put the whole man in a dreadful consternation; awfully summon all the powers of the foul to help in a strait; make the stiff heart to tremble, and the knees to bow; set the eyes a weeping, the tongue a confessing, and oblige the man to cast out the goods into the sea, which it apprehends are likely to fink the ship of the foul, though the heart still goes after them: yet it is an evil conscience, which naturally leads to despair, and will do it effectually, as in Judas's case; unless either lusts prevail over it, to lull it alleep, as in the case of Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. or the blood of Christ prevail over it, sprinkling and purging it from dead works, as in the case of all true converts, Heb. ix. 14. and x. 22.

Lastly, Even the memory bears evident marks of this corruption. What is good and worthy to be remembered, as it makes but slender impression, so that im pression easily wears off; the memory, as a leaking vefsel, lets it slip, Heb. ii. 1. As a sieve that is full when in the water, lets all go when it is taken out, so is the memory with respect to spiritual things. But how does it retain what ought to be forgotten! Naughty things so bear in themselves upon it, that though men would fain have them out of mind, yet they stick there like glew However forgetful men are in other things, it is hard to forget an injury. So the memory often furnishes new fewel to old lusts; makes men in old age re-act the fins of their youth, while it prefents them again to the mind with delight, which thereupon licks up the former vomit. Thus it is like a riddle, that lets through the pure grain, and keeps the refuse.

Thus far of the corruption of the soul.

The body itself also is partaker of this corruption and defilement, so far as it is capable thereof. Wherefore the Scripture calls it *finful flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. We may take this up in two things: (1.) The natural temper,

or rather diftemper, of the bodies of Adam's children, as it in an effect of original fin, so it hath a natural tendency to fin, incites to fin, leads the foul into fnares, yea, is itself a fnare to the foul. The body is a furious beast, of such metal, that if it be not beat down, kept under, and brought into subjection, it will cast the foul into much fin and mifery, I Cor. ix. 27. There is a vileness in the body, (Phil. iii. 21.) which, as to the faints, will never be removed, until it be melted down in the grave, and cast into a new mould, at the refurrection, to come forth a spiritual body: and will never be carried off from the bodies of those who are not partakers of the refurrection to life. (2.) It serves the foul in many fins. Its members are instruments or weapons of unrighteousness, whereby men fight against % God, Rom. vi. 13. The eyes and ears are open doors, by which impure motions and finful defires enter the foul: the tongue is a world of iniquity, James iii. 6. 8. an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. By it the impure heart vents a great deal of its filthiness. The throat is an open sepulchre, Rom. iii. 13. The feet run the devil's errands, ver. 15. The belly is made a God, Phil. iii. 19. not only by drunkards and riotous livers, but by every natural man, Zech. vii. 6. So the body naturally is an agent for the devil, and a magazine of armour against the Lord.

To conclude; Man by nature is wholly corrupted; from the fole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no foundness in him. As in a dunghill, every part contributes to the corruption of the whole: so the natural man, while in that state, grows still worse and worse. The foul is made worse by the body, and the body by the soul: and every faculty of the soul serves to corrupt another more and more. Thus much for the second ge-

neral head.

How Man's Nature was corrupted.

THIRDLY, I shall shew how man's nature comes to be thus corrupted. The heathens perceived that man's nature was corrupted; but how sin entered, they could not tell. But the Scripture is very plain in that point,

Rom. vi. 12. 19. By one man six entered into the world. By one man's disobedience many were made finners. Adam's fin corrupted man's nature, and leavened the whole lump of mankind. We putrified in Adam, as our root. The root was poisoned, and so the branches were invenomed; the vine turned into the vine of Sodom, and fo the grapes became grapes of gall. Adam, by his fin, became not only guilty, but corrupt; and fo transmits guilt and corruption to his posterity, Gen. v. 3. Job xiv. 4. By his fin he stripped himself of his original righteousness, and corrupted himself: we were in him representatively, being represented by him, as our moral head, in the covenant of works; we were in him feminally, as our natural head; hence we fell in him, and by his disobedience were made finners, as Levi, in the loins of Abraham, paid tithes, Heb. vii. 9, 10. His first sin is imputed to us; therefore justly are we left under the want of his original righteousness, which being given to him as a common person, he cast off by his sin: and this necessarily followed, in him and us, by the corruption of the whole nature; righteousness and corruption being two contraries, one of which must needs always be in man, as a subject capable thereof. And Adam, our common father. being corrupt, we are so too; for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?

Although it is sufficient to prove the righteousness of this dispensation, that it was from the Lord, who doth all things well; yet to silence the murmurings of proudnature, let these sew things further be considered: (1.) In the covenant, wherein Adam represented us, eternal happiness was promised to him and his posterity, upon condition of his, that is Adam's, perfect obedience, as the representative of all mankind: whereas, if there had been no covenant, they could not have pleaded eternal life upon their most perfect obedience, but might have been, after all, reduced to nothing; notwithstanding, by natural justice, they would have been liable to God's eternal wrath, in case of sin, Who, in that case, would not have consented to that representation? (2.) Adam had a power given him to

stand. Being made upright, he was as capable of standing for himself, and all his posterity, as any after him could be for themselves. This trial of mankind in their head, would foon have been over, and the crown won for them all, had he stood; whereas, had his posterity been independent of him, and every one left to act for himself, the trial would have been continually carrying on, as men came into the world. (3.) He had the strongest natural affection to engage him, being our common father. (4.) His own stock was in the ship, his all lay at stake, as well as ours. He had no separate interest from ours; but if he forgot ours, he must necessarily forget his own. (5.) If he had stood, we should have had the light of his mind, the righteousness of his will, and the holiness of his affections, with entire purity, transmitted unto us: we' could not have fallen; the crown of glory, by his obedience, would have been for ever fecured to him and his. This is evident from the nature of a federal reprefentation; and no reason can be given why, seeing we are loft by Adam's fin, we should not have been faved by his obedience. On the other hand, it is reasonable, that he falling, we should with him bear the loss. Lastly, Such as quarrel with this dispensation, must renounce their part in Christ; for we are no otherwise made finners by Adam, than we are made righteous by Christ; from whom we have both imputed and inherent righteousness. We no more made choice of the fecond Adam, for our head and representative in the fecond covenant, than we did of the first Adam in the first covenant.

Let none wonder that such an horrible change could be brought on, by one sin of our first parents; for thereby they turned away from God, as their chief end, which necessarily infers an universal depravation. Their sin was a complication of evils, a total apostasy from God, a violation of the whole law. By it they broke all the ten commands at once. (1.) They chose new gods. They made their belly their god, by their sensuality; self their god, by their ambition; yea, and the devil their god, by believing him, and disbelieving their

Maker. (2.) Though they received, yet they observed not, that ordinance of God about the forbidden fruit. They contemned that ordinance, fo plainly enjoined them, and would needs carve out to themselves how to ferve the Lord. (3.) They took the name of the Lord their God in vain; despising his attributes, his justice, truth, power, &c. They grosly profaned the facramental tree; abused his word, by not giving credit to it; abused that creature of his, which they should not have touched; and violently misconstrued his providence, as if God, by forbidding them that tree, had been standing in the way of their happiness: therefore he suffered them not to escape his righteous judgement. (4.) They remembered not the Sabbath to keep it holy, but put themselves out of a condition to serve God aright on his own day: neither kept they that state of holy rest wherein God had put them. (5.) They cast off their relative duties: Eve forgets herself, and acts without advice of her husband, to the ruin of both: Adam, instead of admonishing her to repent, yields to the temptation, and confirms her in her wickedness. They forgot all duty to their posterity. They honoured not their Father in heaven; and therefore their days were not long in the land which the Lord their God gave them. (6.) They ruined themselves and all their posterity. (7.) Gave up themselves to luxury and fenfuality. (8.) Took away what was not their own, against the express will of the great Owner. (9.) They bore false witness, and lied against the Lord, before angels, devils, and one another; in effect giving out that they were hardly dealt by, and that Heaven grudged their happiness. (10.) They were discontent with their lot, and coveted an evil covetousness to their house; which ruined both them and theirs. was the image of God on man defaced all at once.

The Dostrine of the Corruption of Nature applied.

Use I. For information. Is man's nature wholly corrupted? Then,

1. No wonder that the grave opens its devouring mouth for us, as foon as the womb hall cast us forth:

and that the cradle be turned into a cossin, to receive the corrupt lump: for we are all, in a spiritual sense, dead-born; yea, and slithy, (Psal. xiv. 3.) noisome, rank, and stinking as a corrupt thing, as the word imports. Then let us not complain of the miseries which we are exposed to, at our entrance into, nor of the continuance of them, while we are in the world. Here is the venom that has poisoned all the springs of earthly enjoyments which we have to drink of. It is the corruption of man's nature that brings forth all the miseries of human life in churches, states, and samilies; and in men's souls and bodies.

2. Behold here, as in a glass, the spring of all the wickedness, profanity, and formality, which is in the world; the source of all the disorders in thy own heart and life. Every thing acts like itself, agreeable to its own nature; and so corrupt man acts corruptly. You need not wonder at the sinfulness of your own heart and life, nor at the sinfulness and perverseness of others: if a man be crooked, he cannot but halt; and if the clock be set wrong, how can it point the hour aright.

3. See here why fin is so pleasant, and religion such a burden to carnal spirits: sin is natural, holiness not so. Oxen cannot feed in the sea, nor sisses in the fruitful fields: a swine, brought into a palace, would soon get away again, to wallow in the mire: and corrupt nature

tends ever to impurity.

1. Learn from this the nature and necessity of regeneration. First, This discovers the nature of regeneration in these two things; (1.) It is not a partial, but a total change, though imperfect in this life. Thy whole nature is corrupted, and therefore the cure must go through every part. Regeneration makes not only a new head for knowledge, but a new heart, and new affections for holiness. All things become new, 2 Cor. v. 17. If one having received many wounds, should be cured of them all, save one only, he might bleed to death by that one, as well as a thousand So if the change go not through the whole man, it is naught. (2.) It is not a change made by human industry, but by the mighty power of the Spirit of God. A man must be born of

the Spirit, John iii, 5. Accidental diseases may be cured by men, but those which are natural, not without a miracle, John ix. 32. The change brought upon men by good education, or forced upon them by a natural conscience, though it may pass among men for a saving change, yet it is not so; for our nature is corrupt, and none but the God of nature can change it. Though a gardener, ingrasting a pear-branch into an apple-tree, may make the apple tree bear pears; yet the art of man cannot change the nature of the apple-tree: fo a man may pin a new life to his old heart, but he cannever change the heart. Secondly, This also shews the necessity of regeneration. It is absolutely necessary in order to falvation, John iii. 3. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. No unclean thing can enter the new Jerusalem: but thou art wholly unclean, while in thy natural state. If every member of thy body were disjointed, each joint must be loofened, before the members can be fet right again. This is the case of thy soul, as thou hast heard: therefore thou must be born again, otherwise thou shalt never see heaven, unless it be afar off, as the rich man in hell did. Deceive not thyself: no mercy of God, no blood of Christ, will bring thee to heaven, in thy unregenerate state: for God will never open a fountain of mercy to wash away his own holiness and truth; nor did Christ shed his precious blood to blot out the truths of God, or to overturn God's measures about the salvation of finners. Heaven! what would you do there, who are not born again? you who are no ways fitted for Christ the Head? That would be a strange sight, a holy Head, and members wholly corrupt! a Head full of treasures of grace! members wherein are nothing but treasures of wickedness! a Head obedient to the death, and heels kicking against heaven! You are no better adapted for the fociety above, than beafts for converse with men. Thou art a hater of true holiness; and, at the first fight of a faint there, wouldst cry out, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy! Nay, the unrenewed man, if it were possible he could go to heaven in that state, he would no otherwise go to it, than now he

100 Dollrine of Natural Corruption applied. State II. comes to the duties of holiness, that is, leaving his heart behind him.

Use II. For lamentation. Well may we lament thy case, O natural man, for it is the saddest case one can be in, out of hell. It is time to lament for thee; for thou art dead already, dead while thou livest; thou carriest about with thee a dead soul in a living body; and because thou art dead thou canst not lamen thy own case. Thou art loathsome in the sight of God; for thou art altogether corrupt; thou hast no good in thee. Thy soul is a mass of darkness, rebellion, and vileness before the Lord. Thou thinkest, perhaps, that thou hast a good heart to God, good inclinations, and good desires: but God knows there is nothing good in thee; every imagination of thine heart is only evil continually. Thou canst do no good; thou canst do nothing but sin. For,

First, Thou art the servant of sin, Rom. vi. 17. and therefore free from righteousness, verse 20. Whatever righteousness be, poor foul, thou art free from it; thou dost not, thou canst not meddle with it. Thou art under the dominion of fin; a dominion where righteoufness can have no place. Thou art a child and servant of the devil, though thou be neither wizzard nor witch; seeing thou art yet in a state of nature, John viii. 44, Te are of your Father the devil. And, to prevent any mistake, consider, that sin and Satan have two forts of fervants: (1.) There are some employed, as it were, in coarser work: those bear the devil's mark in their foreheads, having no form of godliness; but are profane, grofly ignorant, mere moralists, not so much as performing the external duties of religion, but living in the view of the world as fons of earth, only minding earthly things, Phil. iii. 19. (2.) There are some employed in a more refined fort of fervice to fin, who carry the devil's mark in their right hand; which they can and do hide from the view of the world. These are close hypocrites, who facrifice as much to the corrupt mind, as the others to the flesh, Eph. ii. 3. These are ruined by a more undiscernible trade of sin: pride, unbelief, self-seeking, and the like, swarm in, and prey upon their corrupted, wholly corrupted fouls. Both are servants of the same house; the latter as far as the former from righteousness.

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Secondly, How is it possible that thou shouldst be able to do any good, thou whose nature is wholly corrupt? Can fruit grow where there is no root? or can there be an effect without a cause? Can the fig-tree bear olive-berries, either a vine figs? If thy nature be wholly corrupt, as indeed it is, all thou dost is certainly so too; for no effect can exceed the virtue of its cause. Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit? Matth. vii. 18.

Ah! what a miserable spectacle is he that can do nothing but fin! Thou art the man, whoever thou art, that art yet in thy natural state. Hear, O sinner, what

is thy case.

First, Innumerable fins compass thee about; moun tains of guilt are lying upon thee; floods of impurities overwhelm thee. Living lusts, of all forts, roll up and down in the dead sea of thy foul; where no good can breath, because of the corruption there. Thy lips are unclean: the opening of thy mouth is as the opening of an unripe grave, full of stench and rottenness, Rom. iii. 13. Their throat is an open sepulchre. Thy natural actions are fin; for when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for your felves, and drink for your felves? Zech. vii. 9. Thy civil actions are fin, Prov. xxi. 4. The ploughing of the wicked is sin. Thy religious actions are sin, Prov. xv. 8. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. The thoughts and imaginations of thy heart are only evil continually. A deed may be foon done, a word foon spoken, a thought swiftly passthrough the heart; but each of these is an item in thy accounts. O fad reckoning! As many thoughts, words, and actions, fo many fins. The longer thou livest; thy accounts fwell the more. Should a tear be dropt for every fin, thine head must be waters, and thine eyes a fountain of tears: for nothing but fin comes from thee. Thy heart frames nothing but evil imaginations: there is nothing in thy life but what is framed by thine heart; and therefore there is nothing in thy heart or life, but evil.

Secondly, All thy religion, if thou hast any, is lost labour, as to acceptance with God, or any faving effect on thyself. Art thou yet in thy natural state? Truly, then, thy duties are fins, as was just now hinted. Would

102 Doctrine of Natural Corruption applied. State II. not the best wine be loathsome, in a vessel wherein there is no pleafure? So is the religion of an unregenerate man, Under the law, the garment which the flesh of the facrifice was carried in, though it touched other things, did not make them holy: but he that was unclean, touching any thing, whether common or facred, made it unclean. Even fo thy duties cannot make thy corrupt foul holy, though they in themselves be good; but thy corrupt heart defiles them, and makes them unclean, Hag. ii. 12, 13, 14. Thou wast wont to divide thy works into two forts, some good, some evil: but thou must count again, and put them all under one head; for God writes on them all, Only evil. This is lamentable. It will be no wonder to fee those beg in harvest, who fold their hands, and sleep, in feedtime: but to be labouring with others in the spring, and yet have nothing to reap when the harvest comes, is a very fad case; and will be the case of all profes-

fors, living and dying in their natural state.

Lastly, Thou canst not help thyself. What canst thou do to take away thy fin, who art wholly corrupt? Nothing, truly, but fin. If a natural man begin to relent, drop a tear for his fin, and reform, prefently the corrupt nature apprehends at least a merit of congruity: he has done much himself (he thinks), and God cannot but do more for him on that account. In the mean time he does nothing but fin: fo that the fitness of the merit is, that the leper be put out of the camp; the dead foul buried out of fight; and the corrupt lump cast into the pit. How canst thou think to recover thyfelf, by any thing which thou canst do? Will mud and filth wash out filthiness? and wilt thou purge out fin by finning? Job took a potsherd to scrape himfelf. because his hands were as full of boils as his body. This is the case of thy corrupt soul; not to be recovered, but by Jefus Christ, whose strength was dried up like a potsherd, Pfal. xxii. 15. Thou art poor indeed, extremely miserable and poor, Rev. iii. 17. Thou halt no shelter but a refuge of lies; no garment for thy foul, but filthy rags; nothing to nourish it but hufks, that cannot fatisfy. And more than this, thou didst Head I. Doctrine of Natural Corruption applied. 103

get such a bruite in the loins of Adam, as is not yet cured. Thou art without strength, Rom. v. 6. unable to do or work for thyself: nay more than all this, thou canst not so much as think aright, but art lying

helples, as an infant exposed in the open field, Ezek.

xvi. 5.

Use III. I exhort you to believe this fad truth. Alas! it is evident, that it is very little believed in the world. Few are concerned to get their corrupt conversation changed: but sewer, by far, to get their nature changed. Most men know not what they are, nor what spirits they are of: they are as the eye, which feeing many things, never fees itself. But until you know every one the plague of his own heart, there is no hope of your recovery. Why will you not believe it? You have plain scripture testimony for it; but you are loath to entertain such an ill opinion of yourselves: alas! this is the nature of your disease, Rev. iii. 17. Thou-knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable. and poor, and blind, and naked. Lord, open their eyes to fee it, before they die of it; and in hell lift up their eyes, and fee what they will not fee now.

I shall shut up this weighty point, of the corruption of man's nature, with a few words as to another doctrine

from the text.

DOCTRINE, God takes special notice of our natural corruption, or the sin of our nature. This he testissies two ways; (1.) By his word, as in the text, God fave that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually. See Psal. xiv. 2, 3. (2.) By his works. God marks his particular notice of it, and displeasure with it, as in many of his works, so especi-

ally in these two,

(1.) In the death of the infant children of men. Many mileries they have been exposed to: they were drowned in the deluge, confumed in Sodom by fire and brimstone; they have been slain with the sword, dashed against the stones, and are still dying ordinary deaths. What is the true cause of this? On what ground doth the holy God thus pursue them? Is it the sin of their parents? That may be the occasion of the Lord's raising

the process against them; but it must be their own sin that is the ground of the sentence passing on them: for the soul that simeth, it shall die, saith God, Ezek. xviii. 4. Is it their own actual sin? They have none. But as men do with toads and serpents, which they kill at first sight, before they have done any hurt; because of their venomous nature: so it is in this case.

(2.) In the birth of the elect children of God. When the Lord is about to change their nature, he makes the fin of their nature lie heavy upon their spirits. When he means to let out the corruption, the lance goes deep into their souls, reaching to the root of sin, Rom. vii. 7, 8, 9. The slesh, or corruption of nature, is pierced, being crucisied, as well as the affections and lusts, Gal.

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Use. Let us then have a special eye upon the corruption and sin of our nature. God sees it: O that we saw it too, and that sin were ever before us! What avails it to notice other sins, while this mother-sin is not noticed! Turn your eyes inward to the sin of your nature. It is to be feared, that many have this work to begin yet; that they have shut the door, while the grand thief is yet in the house undiscovered. This is a weighty

point; and in handling of it,

I. I shall, for conviction, point at some evidences of men's overlooking the fin of their nature; which yet the Lord takes particular notice of. (1.) Men's looking on themselves with such confidence, as if they were in no hazard of gross sins. Many would take it very hainously to get such a caution as Christ gave his apostles, Luke xxi. 34. Take heed of surfeiting and drunkennefs. If any should suppose them to break out in gross abominations, each would be ready to fay, Am I a dog? It would raife the pride of their hearts, but not their fear and trembling; because they know not the corruption of their nature. (2.) Want of tendernels towards those that fall. Many, in that case, cast off all bowels of Christian compassion; for they do not consider themselves, lest they also be tempted, Gal. vi. 1. Men's pasfions are often highest against the faults of others, when fin fleeps foundly in their own breafts. Even good Da-

vid, when he was at his worst, was most violent against the faults of others. While his conscience was asleep under his guilt, in the matter of Uriah, the Spirit of the Lord takes notice, that his anger was greatly kindled against the man in the parable, 2 Sam. xii. 5. And on good grounds it is thought, it was at the same time that he treated the Ammonites fo cruelly, as is related ver. 31. Putting them under faws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and making them pass through the brick-kiln. Grace makes men zealous against fin in others, as well as in themselves: but eyes turned inward to the corruption of nature, cloathe them with pity and compassion; and fill them with thankfulness to the Lord, that they themselves were not the persons left to be fuch spectacles of human frailty. (3.) There are not a few, who, if they be kept from afflictions in worldly things, and from gross out-breakings in their conversation, know not what it is to have a sad heart. If they meet with a cross, which their proud hearts cannot floop to bear, they are ready to fay, O to be gone! But the corruption of their nature never makes them long for heaven. Lufts, scandalously breaking out at a time, will mar their peace: but the fin of their nature never makes them a heavy heart. (4.) Delaying of repentance, in hopes to fet about it afterwards. Many have their own appointed time for repentance and reformation: as if they were such complete masters over theirlusts, that they can allow them to gather more ftrength, and yet overcome them. They take up refolutions to amend, without an eye to Jesus Christ, union with him, and strength from him; a plain evidence that they are strangers to themselves: so they are left to themselves, and their flourishing resolutions wither; for, as they fee not the necessity, fo they get not the benefit, of the dew from heaven, to water them. (5.) Men's venturing freely on temptations, and promising liberally in their own strength. They cast themselves fearlesly into temptation, in considence of their coming off fairly: but, were they sensible of the corruption of their nature, they would beware of entering on the devil's ground: as one girt about with bags of

gun-powder, would be unwilling to walk where sparks of fire are flying, left he should be blown up. Selfjealously well becomes Christians. Lord, is it 1? They that know the deceit of their bow, will not be very confident that they shall hit the mark. (6.) Unacquaintedness with heart plagues. The knowledge of the plagues of the heart is a rare qualification. There are indeed some of them written in such great characters, that he who runs may read them: but there are others more subtile, which few discern. How few are there, to whom the bias of the heart to unbelief is a burden? Nay, they perceive it not. Many have had sharp convictions of other fins, that were never to this day convinced of their unbelief; though that is the fin especially aimed at in a thorough conviction, John xvi. 8, 9. He will reprove the world of sin,—because they believe not on me. A disposition to establish our own righteousness, is a weed that naturally grows in every man's heart; but few sweat at the plucking of it up: it lurks undiscovered. The bias of the heart, to the way of the covenant of works, is a hidden plague of the heart to many. All the difficulty which they find is, in getting up their hearts to duties: they find no difficulty in getting their hearts off them, and over them to Jesus Christ. How hard is it to bring men off from their own righteousness? Yea, it is very hard to convince them of their leaning to it at all. Lastly, Pride and self-conceit. A view of the corruption of nature would be very humbling, and oblige him that has it to reckon himfelf the chief of finners. Under the greatest attainments and enlargements, it would be ballast to his heart, and hide pride from his eyes. The want of thorough humiliation, piercing to the fin of one's nature, is the ruin of many professors: for digging deep makes great difference between wise and foolish builders, Luke vi. 48; 49.

II. I will lay before you a few things, in which you should have a special eye to original sin. (1.) Have a special eye to it, in your application to Jesus Christ. Do you find any need of Christ, which sends you to him as the Physician of souls? O forget not your di-

feafe, when you are with the Physician. They never vet knew well their errand to Christ, that went not to him for the fin of their nature: for his blood to take away the guilt of it, and his Spirit to break the power of it. Though in the bitterness of your souls you should lay before him a catalogue of your fins of omission and commission, which might reach from earth to heaven; yet, if original fin were wanting in it, affure yourselves, that you have forgot the best part of the errand which a poor finner has to the Physician of souls. What would it have availed the people of Jericho, to have fet before Elisha all the vessels in their city, full of the water that was naught, if they had not led him forth to the fpring, to cast in the salt there? 2 Kings ii. 19, 20, 21. The application is easy. (2.) Have a special eye to it, in your repentance, whether initiative or progressive; in your first repentance, and in the renewing of your repentance afterwards. Though a man be fick, there is no fear of death, if the sickness strike not to his heart: and there is as little fear of the death of fin, as long as the fin of our nature is not touched. But if you would repent indeed, let the streams lead you up to the fountain; and mourn over your corrupt nature, as the cause of all sin, in heart, lip, and life, Psal. li. 4, 5. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.—Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (3.) Have a special eye upon it in your mortification, Gal. v. 24. They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh. It is the root of bitterness that must be struck at; which the axe of mortification must be laid to, else we labour in vain. In vain do men go about to purge the streams, while they are at no pains about the muddy fountain: it is vain religion to attempt to make the life truly good, while the corruption of nature retains its ancient vigour, and the power of it is not broken. Laslly, You are to eye it in your daily walk. He that would walk aright, must have one eye upward to Jesus Christ, and another inward to the corruption of his own nature. It is not enough that we look about us, we must also look within us. There the wall is weakest; there our greatest enemy lies;

and there are grounds for daily watching and mourning.

III. I shall offer some reasons, why we should especi-

ally notice the fin of our nature.

1. Because, of all sins, it is the most extensive and diffusive. It goes through the whole man, and spoils all. Other sins mar particular parts of the image of God: but this doth at once deface the whole. A disease, asfecting any particular member of the body, is dangerous: but that which affects the whole is worse. The corruption of nature is the poison of the old serpent, cast into the fountain of action; and infects every action,

and every breathing of the foul.

2. It is the cause of all particular lusts, and actual sins, in our hearts and lives. It is the spawn which the great leviathan has left in the souls of men, from whence comes all the fry of actual sins and abominations, Mark vii. 21. Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, &c. It is the bitter fountain: particular lusts are but rivulets running from it, which bring forth into the life a part only, and not the whole of what is within. The fountain is always above the streams: and where the water is good, it is best in the fountain; where it is bad, it is worse there. The corruption of nature being that which defiles all, itself must

needs be the most abominable thing.

3. It is virtually all fin: for it is the feed of all fins, which want but the occasion to fet up their heads, being, in the corruption of nature, as the effect in the virtue of its cause. Hence it is called a body of death, (Rom. vii. 24.) as confisting of the several members belonging to fuch a body of fins, (Col. ii. 11.) whose life lies in spiritual death. It is the cursed ground, fit to bring forth all manner of noxious weeds. As the whole nest of venomous creatures must needs be more dreadful than any few of them that come creeping forth: fo the fin of thy nature, that mother of abominations, must be worse than any particular lusts, that appear stirring in thy heart and life. Never did every fin appear, in the conversation of the vilest wretch that ever lived; but look thou into thy corrupt nature, and there thou mayest see all and every sin, in the seed and root thereof. There is a fulness of all unrighteousness there, Rom. i. 29. There is atheism, idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, and whatsoever is vile. Possibly none of these appear to thee in thy heart: but there is more in that unfathomable depth of wickedness than thou knowest. Thy corrupt heart is like an ant's nest, on which, while the stone lieth, none of them appear; but take off the stone, and stir them up but with the point of a straw, you will see what a swarm is there, and how lively they be. Just such a sight would thy heart afford thee, did the Lord but withdraw the restraint he has upon it, and suffer Satan to stir it up by temptation.

4. The fin of our nature is, of all fins, the most fixing and abiding. Sinful actions, though the guilt and stain of them may remain, yet in themselves they pass away. The drunkard is not always at his cups, nor the unclean person always acting lewdness. But the corruption of nature is abiding fin: it remains with men in its full power, by night and by day; at all times fixed, as with bands of iron and brass, till their nature be changed by converting grace; and it remains even with the godly, until the death of the body, though not in its reigning power. Pride, envy, covetousness, and the like, are not always stirring in thee. But the proud, envious, carnal nature, is still with thee: even as the clock that is wrong, is not always striking wrong; but the wrong set continues with her without interruption.

5. It is reigning fin, Rom. vi. 12. Let not fin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. There are three things which you may observe in the corrupt heart: (1.) There is in the corrupt nature, the corrupt set of the heart, whereby men are unapt for all good, and fitted for all evil. This the apostle here calls fin, which reigns. (2.) There are particular lusts, or dispositions of corrupt nature, which the apostle calls the lusts thereof; such as pride, covetousness, &c. (3.) There is one among these, which is (like Saul among the people) higher by far than the rest, namely, the sin which doth so easily beset us, Heb. xii. 1. This we usually call the predominant sin, because it doth,

as it were, reign over other particular lufts; fo that other lusts must yield to it. These three are like a river, which divides itself into many streams, whereof one is greater than the rest. The corruption of nature is the river head, which has many particular lusts in which it runs; but it chiefly disburdens itself into what is commonly called one's predominant fin. Now all of these being fed by the sin of our nature, it is evident, that it is reigning fin, which never lofeth its superiority over particular lufts, that live and die with it, and by But, as in some rivers, the main streams runs not always in one and the fame channel; fo particular predominants may be changed, as lust in youth may be fucceeded by covetousness in old age. Now what doth it avail to reform in other things, while reigning fin remains in its full power? What though some particular lust be broken? If sin, the sin of our nature, keep the throne, it will fet up another in its stead; as when a water course is stopped in one place, if the fountain is not dammed up, it will stream forth another way. Thus, tome cast off their prodigality, but covetousness comes up in its stead: some cast away their profanity, and the corruption of nature fends not its main stream that way, as before; but it runs in another channel; namely, in that of a legal disposition, self-righteousness, or the like. So that people are ruined, by their not eyeing the fin of their nature.

Laftly, It is hereditary evil, Pfal. li. 5. In fin did my mother conceive me. Particular lusts are not so, but in the virtue of their cause. A prodigal father may have a frugal fon; but this disease is necessarily propagated in nature, and therefore hardest to cure. Surely, then, the word should be given out against original sin, as against the king of Israel, 1 Kings xxii. 31. Fight neither with small nor great, save only with this: For this sin being broke, all other fins are broken with it; and while it stands entire, there is no victory.

IV. That you may get a view of the corruption of your nature, I would recommend to you three things. (1.) Study to know the spirituality and extent of the law of God, for that is the glass wherein you may see

yourselves. (2.) Observe your hearts at all times, but especially under temptation. Temptation is a fire that brings up the fcum of the vile heatt: carefully mark the first risings of corruption. Lastly, Go to God, through Jesus Christ, for illumination by his Spirit. Lay out your foul before the Lord, as willing to know the vileness of your nature: say to him, That which I know not, teach thou me. And be willing to take light in from the word. Believe, and you shall see. It is by the word that the Spirit teacheth, but without the Spirit's teaching, all other teaching will be to no purpose. Though the gospel were to shine about you, like the fun at noon day, and this great truth ever fo plainly preached, you will never see yourselves aright, until the Spirit of the Lord light his candle within your breast: the fulness and glory of Christ, and the corruption and vileness of our nature, are never rightly learned, but where the Spirit of Christ is the teacher.

To shut up this weighty point, let the consideration of what has been faid, commend Christ to you all. You that are brought out of your natural state of corruption. unto Christ, be humble; still coming to Christ, and so improve your union with him, to the further weakening of your natural corruption. Is your nature changed? The day was you would not ftir: now you are cured; but remember the cure is not yet perfected, you still go halting. Though it were better with you than it is, the remembrance of what you were by nature should keep you low. You that are yet in your natural state, take this with you: believe the corruption of your nature; and let Christ, and his grace, be precious in your eyes. O that you would at length be ferious about the state of your souls! What do you intend to do? You must die; you must appear before the judgment-seat of God. Will you lie down and sleep another night at ease in this case? Do it not: for before another day you may be fummoned before God's dreadful tribunal, in the grave-cloaths of your corrupt state; and your vile fouls cast into the pit of destruction, as a corrupt lump, to be for ever buried out of God's fight.

For I testify unto you all, there is no peace with God,

no pardon, no heaven for you, in your natural state: there is but a step between you and eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord: if the brittle thread of your life, which may be broke with a touch, ere you are aware, be broken while you are in this state, you are ruined for ever, without remedy: but come speedily to Jesus Christ; he has cleansed as vile souls as yours; and yet he will cleanse the blood that he hath not cleansed, Joel iii. 21. Thus far of the sinfulness of man's natural state.

H E A D II.

The MISERY of Man's Natural State.

Ephes. ii. 3. We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

HAVING shewed you the sinfulness of man's natural state, I come now to lay before you the misery of it. A finful state cannot but be a milerable state. If fin go before, wrath follows of course. Corruption and destruction are so knit together, that the Holy Ghost calls destruction, even eternal destruction, corruption, Gal. vi. 8. He that forweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, that is, everlasting destruction; as is clear from its being opposed to life everlasting, in the following clause. The apostle having shewn the Ephefians their real state by nature, to wit, that they were dead in fins and trespasses, altogether corrupt, he tells them, in the words of the text, their relative state, namely, that the pit was digged for them, while in that state of corruption: Being dead in fins, they were by nature children of wrath, even as others.

In the words we have four things:

1. The misery of a natural state; it is a state of wrath, as well as a state of sin. We were, says the apostle, children of wrath, bound over and liable to the wrath of God; under wrath in some measure; and, in wrath, bound over to more, even the full measure of

it, in hell, where the floods of it go over the prisoners for ever. Thus Saul, in his wrath, adjudging David to die, (1 Sam. xx. 31.) and David, in his wrath paffing sentence of death against the man in the parable, (2 Sam. xii. 5.) fays, each of them, of his supposed criminal, He shall surely die; or as the words in the first language are, he is a fon of death: So the natural man is a child of wrath, a son of death: He is a malefactor, dead in law, lying in chains of guilt; a criminal, held fast in his fetters till the day of execution; which will not fail to come, unless a pardon be obtained from his God, who is his judge and opponent too. By that means, indeed, children of wrath may become children of the kingdom. The phrase in the text, however common in the holy language, is very fignificant. As it is evident that the apostle, calling natural men the children of disobedience, (ver 2.) means more than that they were disobedient children; for such may the Lord's own children be; so, to be children of wrath, is more than fimply to be liable to, or under wrath. Jesus Christ was liable to, and under wrath: but I doubt whether we have any warrant to fay he was a child of wrath. The phrase seems to intimate, that men are, whatever they are in their natural state, under the wrath of God; that they are wholly under wrath: wrath is, as it were, woven into their very nature, and mixeth itself with the whole of the man, who is (if I may fo speak) a very lump of wrath, a child of hell, as the iron in the fire is all fire. For men naturally are children of wrath; come forth, fo to speak, out of the womb of wrath; as Jonah's gourd was the fon of a night, (which we render, came up in a night, Jonah iv. 10.) as if it had come out of the womb of the night, (as we read of the womb of the morning, Psal. cx. 3.) and fo the birth, following the womb whence it came, was foon gone. Thus, sparks of fire are called fons of the burning coal, Job v. 7. marg. Ifa, xxi. 10. O my threshing, and the corn (or son) of my floor, threshing in the floor of wrath, and, as it were, brought forth by it. Thus the natural man is a child of wrath: it comes into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones, Pfalm

tion among the apostles, yet all men, by nature, are of

the fame family.

2. Here is the rise of this misery; men have it by nature. They owe it to their nature; not to their substance or essence: for that neither is nor was sin, and therefore cannot make them children of wrath; though, for fin, it may be under wrath: not to their nature, as qualified, at man's creation, by his Maker; but to their nature, as vitiated and corrupted by the fall; to the vitious quality, or corruption, of their nature, (whereof before) which is their principle of action, and ceasing from action, the only principle in an unregenerate state. Now, by this nature, men are children of wrath; as, in time of pestilential infection, one draws in death with the disease then raging. Wherefore feeing, from our first being, as children of Adam, we be corrupt children, shapen in iniquity, conceived in fin; we are also from that moment children of wrath.

3. The universality of this misery. All are by nature children of wrath; We saith the apostle, even as others; Jews as well as Gentiles. Those that are now, by grace, the children of God, were, by nature, in no better case than those that are still in their natural.

ral state.

Laftly, Here is a glorious and happy change intimated; we were children of wrath, but are not so now; grace has brought us out of that fearful state. This the apostle says of himself, and other believers. And thus, it well becomes the people of God to be often standing on the shore, and looking back to the red-sea of the state of wrath they were weltering in, even as others.

Man's Natural State is a State of Wrath.

DOCTRINE, The state of nature is a state of wrath. Every one, in a natural unregenerate state, is in a state of wrath. We are born children of wrath; and continue so, until we be born again. Nay, as soon as we are children of Adam, we are children of wrath.

I shall usher in what I am to say on this point, with a few observations touching the universality of this state

Head II. The Misery of Man's natural State. of wrath, which may ferve to prepare the way for the

word into your consciences.

Wrath has gone as wide as ever fin went. When angels finned, the wrath of God broke in upon them as a flood. God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, 2 Pet. ii. 4. It was thereby demonftrated, that no natural excellency in the creature can shield it from the wrath of God, if once it become a finful creature. The finest and nicest piece of the workmanship of heaven, if once the Creator's image upon it be defaced by fin, God can and will dash it in pieces in his wrath, unless satisfaction be made to justice, and that image be restored; neither of which the sinner himself can do. Adam sinned; and the whole lump of mankind was leavened, and bound over to the fiery oven of God's wrath. From the text you may learn, (1.) The ignorance of that state cannot free men from it. The Gentiles, that knew not God, were by nature children of wrath, even as others. A man's house may be on fire, his wife and children perishing in the flames, while he knows nothing of it; and therefore is not concerned about it. Such is your case, O you that are ignorant of these things! Wrath is silently sinking into your fouls, while you are bleffing youfelves, faying, We shall have peace. You need not a more certain token that you are children of wrath, than that you never yet faw yourselves such. You cannot be the children of God, that never yet faw yourselves children of the devil. You cannot be in the way to heaven, that never faw yourselves by nature in the high-road to hell. You are grofly ignorant of your state by nature; and so ignorant of God and of Christ, and your need of him: and though you look on your ignorance as a covert from wrath, yet, take it out of the mouth of God himself, that it will ruin you, if it be not removed, Isa. xxvii. 11 It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them. See 2 Theff. i. 8. Hof. ix. 6. (2.) No outward privileges can exempt men from this state of wrath; for the Jews, the children of the kingdom, God's peculiar people, were children of wrath, even as others. Though you be

church-members, partakers of all church-privileges; though you be descended of godly parents, of great and honourable families; be what you will, you are by nature heirs of hell, children of wrath. (3.) No profession, no attainments in a profession of religion, do or can exempt a man from this state of wrath. Paul was one of the strictest sect of the Jewish religion, Acts xxvi. 5. yet a child of wrath, even as others, till he was converted. The close hypocrite, and the profane, are alike, as to their state; however different their converfation be: and they will be alike in their fatal end, Pfal. cxxv. 5. As for fuch as turn afide unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. (4.) Young ones, that are but fetting out into the world, have not that to do to make themselves children of wrath, by following the graceless multitude. They are children of wrath by nature; so it is done already: they were born heirs of hell; they will indeed make themselves more so, if they do not, while they are young, flee from that wrath which they are born to, by fleeing to Jesus Christ. Lastly, Whatever men are now by grace, they are even as others by nature. This may be a fad meditation to them that have been at ease from their youth, and have had no changes.

Now, these things being premised, I shall, in the first place, Shew what this state of wrath is; next,

Confirm the doctrine; and then apply it.

I. I am to shew what this state of wrath is. But who can fully describe the wrath of an angry God? None can do it. Yet so much of it may be discovered, as may serve to convince men of the absolute necessity of sleeing to Jesus Christ, out of that state of wrath. Anger, in men, is a passion and commotion of the spirit, for an injury received, with a desire to resent the same: when it comes to a height, and is fixed in one's spirit, it is called wrath. Now there are no passions in God, properly speaking: they are inconsistent with his absolute unchangeableness and independency: therefore Paul and Barnabas (to remove the mistake of the Lycaonians, who thought that they were gods) tells them, they were

men of like passions with themselves, Acts xiv. 15. Wrath, when it is attributed to God, must not be considered in respect of the affection of wrath, but the effects thereof. Wrath is a fire in the bowels of man, tormenting the man himself: but there is no perturbation in God. His wrath does not in the least mar that infinite repose and happiness which he hath in himself. It is a most pure, undisturbed act of his will, producing dreadful effects against the sinner. It is little which we know of the infinite God; but, condescending to our weakness, he is pleased to speak of himself to us after the manner of men. Let us therefore notice man's wrath, but remove every thing, in our confideration of the wrath of God, that implies imperfection; and fo we may attain to fome view of it, however scanty. By this means we are led to take up the wrath of God against the natural man in these three particulars:

First, There is wrath in the heart of God against him. The Lord approves him not, but is displeased with him. Every natural man lies under the displeafure of God; and that is heavier than mountains of brass. Although he be pleased with himself, and others be pleafed with him too, yet God looks down on him displeased. First, His person is under God's displeafure; Thou hatest all workers of iniquity, Psal. v. 5. A godly man's fin is displeasing to God, yet his person is still accepted in the beloved, Eph. i. 6. But God is anory with the wicked every day, Pfal. vii. 11. There is a fire of wrath burns continually against him in the heart of God. They are as dogs and fwine, most abominable creatures, in the fight of God. Though their natural flate be gilded over with a shining profession, yet they are abhorred of God; they are to him as smoke in his nose, Isa. 1xv. 5. and lukewarm water, to be spewed out of his mouth, Rev. iii. 16. whited fepulchres, Matt. xxiii. 27. a generation of vipers, Mat. xii. 34. and a people of his wrath, Ifa. x. 6. Secondly, He is displeased with all they do: it is impossible for them to please him, being unbelievers, Heb. xi. 6. He hates their persons; and so hath no pleasure in, but is displeased with, their best works, Isa. lxvi. 6. He that sacrificeth a lamb, is as if he cut off a dog's neck, &c. Their duty, as done by them, is an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xv. 8. And as men turn their back on those with whom they are angry, so the Lord refusing communion with the natural man in his duties, is a plain indication of this wrath.

Secondly, There is wrath in the word of God against him. When wrath is in the heart, it feeks a vent by the lips; fo God fights against the natural man with the fword of his mouth, Rev. ii. 16. The Lord's word never speaks good of him, but always curfeth and condemneth him. Hence it is, that when he is awakened, the word read or preached often increaseth his horror. First, It condemns all his actions, together with his corrupt nature. There is nothing which he does, but the law declares it to be fin. It is a rule of perfect obedience, from which he always, in all things, declines; and fo it rejects every thing he doth, as finful. Secondly, It pronounceth his doom, and denounceth God's curse against him, Gal. iii. 10. For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them. Be he never fo well in the world, it pronounceth a woe from heaven against him, Isa. iii. 11. The Bible is a quiver filled with arrows of wrath against him; ready to be poured in on his foul. God's threatnings, in his word, hang over his head as a black cloud, ready to shower down on him every moment. The word is indeed the faints fecurity against wrath: but it binds the natural man's fin and wrath together, as a certain pledge of his ruin, if he continues in that state. So the conscience being awakened, and perceiving this tie made by the law, the man is filled with terrors in his foul.

Thirdly, There is wrath in the hand of God, against the natural man. He is under heavy strokes of wrath

already, and is liable to more.

First. There is wrath on his body. It is a piece of cursed clay, which wrath is sinking into, by virtue of the threatening of the first covenant, Gen. ii. 17. In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. There is neither a disease, gripe, nor stitch, that affects him,

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but it comes on him with the sting of God's indignation in it. They are all cords of death, sent before to

bind the prisoner.

Secondly, There is wrath upon his foul. (1.) He can have no communion with God; he is foolish, and shall not stand in God's sight, Pfal. v. 5. When Adam sinned. God turned him out of paradile: and natural men are, as Adam left them, banished from the gracious presence of the Lord; and can have no access to him in that state. There is war between heaven and them: and so all commerce is cut off. They are without God in the zvorld, Eph. ii. 12. The fun is gone down on them, and there is not the least glimpse of favour towards them from heaven. (2.) Hence the foul is left to pine away in its iniquity, The natural darkness of their minds, the averfeness to good in their wills, the disorder of their affections, and distemper of their consciences, and all their natural plagues, are left upon them in a penal way; and, being so left, increase daily. God casts a portion of worldly goods to them, more or less, as a bone is thrown to a dog: but, alas! his wrath against them appears, in that they get no grace. The Physician of souls comes by them, and goes by them, and cures others on each fide of them, while they are confuming away in their iniquity, and ripening daily for utter destruction. (3.) They lie open to fearful additional plagues on their fouls, even in this life. First, Sometimes they meet with deadening strokes, filent blows, from the hand of an angry God: arrows of wrath, that enter into their fouls without noise, Ifa. vi. 10. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes. God strives with them for a while, and convictions enter their consciences; but they rebel against the light; and, by a fecret judgment, they receive a blow on the head; fo that, from that time, they do, as it were, live and rot above ground. Their hearts are deadened, their affections withered, their consciences stupished, and their whole fouls blafted, cast forth as a branch, and withered, John xv. 16. They are plagued with judicial blindness. They shut their eyes against the light, and

they are given over to the devil, the god of this world, to be blinded more, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Yea; God sends them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, 2 Thest. ii. 11. Even conscience, like a false light on the shore, leads them upon rocks: by which they are broken in pieces. They harden themselves against God and he leaves them to Satan and their own hearts, whereby they are hardened more and more. They are often given up to vile affections, Rom. i. 26. The reins are laid on their necks; and they are left to run into all excels, as their furious lusts draw them. Secondly, Sometimes they meet with sharp fiery strokes, whereby their fouls become like mount Sinai, where nothing is feen but fire and finoke; nothing heard but the thunder of God's wrath, and the voice of the trumpet of a broken law, waxing louder and louder: which makes them like Pashur, (Jer. xx. 4.) A terror to themselves. God takes the filthy garments of their fin, which they were wont to fleep in fecurely, overlays them with brimftone, and fets them on fire about their ears: fo they have a hell within them.

Thirdly, There is wrath on the natural man's enjoyments. Whatever be wanting in his house, there is one thing that is never wanting there, Prov. iii. 32. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked. Wrath is on all that he has; on the bread that he eats, the liquor he drinks, the cloaths which he wears. His basket and ftore are curfed, Deut. xxvi. 17. Some things fall wrong with him; and that comes to pass by virtue of this wrath: other things go according to his wish, and there is wrath in that too; for it is a fnare to his foul, Prov. i. 32. The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. This wrath turns his bleffings into curses, Mal. ii. 2. I will curse your bleffings; yea, I have curfed them already. The holy law is a killing letter to him, 2 Cor. iii. 6. The ministry of the gospel a favour of death unto death, chap. ii. 16. In the facrament of the Lord's Supper, be eatheth and drinketh damnation to himself, 1 Cor. xi. 29. Nav, more than all-that, Christ himself is to him a fione of fumbling, and a rock of offence, I Pet. iii. 8. Thus wrath follows the natural man, as his shadow doth his body.

Fourthly, He is under the power of Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. The devil has overcome him, so he is his by conquest, his lawful captive, Isa. xlix. 24. The natural man is condemned already, John iii. 18. and therefore under the heavy hand of him that hath the power of death, that is the devil. He keeps his prisoners in the prison of a natural state, bound hand and foot, Isa. ixi. 1. laden with divers lusts, as chains wherewithal he holds them fast. Thou needest not, as many do, call on the devil to take thee; for he has a fast hold of thee already, as a child of wrath.

Lastly, The natural man bath no security for a moment's fafety, from the wrath of God coming on him to the uttermost. The curse of the law, denounced against him, has already tied him to the stake: so that the arrows of justice may pierce his foul; and, in him may meet all the miseries and plagues that flow from the avenging wrath of God. See how he is fet as a mark to the arrows of wrath, Pfal. vii. 11, 12, 13. God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will rubet his fword: he hath bent his bow, and made it ready; he hath also prepared for him the instruments of death. Doth he lie down to sleep? There is not a promise that he knows of, or can know, to secure him that he shall not be in hell ere he awake. Justice pursues and cries for vengeance on the finner: the law casts the fire-balls of its curses continually upon him: wasted and long tired patience is that which keeps in his life. He walks amidst enemies armed against him: his name may be Magor-Missabib, i. e. Terror round about, Jer. xx. 3. Angels, devils, men, beafts, stones, heaven, and earth, are in readiness, on a word of command from the Lord, to ruin him.

Thus the natural man lives, but he must die too; and death is a dreadful messenger to him. It comes upon him armed with wrath, and puts three sad charges in his hand. (1) Death chargest him to bid an eternal farewell to all things in this world; to leave it, and haste away to another world. Ah! what a dreadful charge must this be to a child of wrath! He can have no comfort from heaven, for God is his enemy: as for

the things of the world, and the enjoyment of his lufts, which were the only springs of his comfort; these are. in a moment dried up to him for ever. He is not ready for another world: He was not thinking of removing fo foon; or, if he was, yet he has no portion fecured to him in the other world, but that which he was born to, and was increasing all his days, namely, a treasure of wrath. But go he must; his clay-god, the world, must be parted with, and what has he more? There was never a glimmering of light, or favour from heaven to his foul: the wrath which hung in the threatening, as a cloud like a man's hand, is darkening the whole heaven above him: if he look unto the earth (from whence all his light was wont to come), behold, trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and he shall be driven to darkness, Isa. viii. 22. (2.) Death charges foul and body to part, till the great day. His foul is required of him, Luke xii. 20. O what a miserable parting must this be to a child of wrath! Care was indeed taken to provide for the body things necessary for this life: but, alas! there is nothing laid up for another life, nothing to be a feed of a glorious refurrection: as it lived, so it must die, and rise again, sinful flesh, fuel for the fire of God's wrath. As for the foul, he was never folicitous to provide for it. It lay in the body, dead to God, and all things truly good; and so must be carried out into the pit, in the gravecloaths of its natural state: for, now death comes, the companions in fin must part. (3.) Death chargeth the foul to appear before the tribunal of God, while the body lies to be carried to the grave, Eccl. xii. 7. The spirit shall return unto God who gave it, Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed unto all men once to die, but after this the judgment. Well were it for the finful foul, if it might be buried together with the body. But that cannot be; It must go and receive its sentence; and shall be shut up in the prison of hell, while the cursed body lies imprisoned in the grave, till the day of the general

When the end of the world, appointed of God, is come, the trumpet shall found, and the dead arise.

Then shall the weary earth, at the command of the Judge, cast forth the bodies, the cursed bodies, of those that lived and died in their natural state; The fea, death, and hell, shall deliver up their dead, Rev. xx. 13. Their miserable bodies and souls shall be re-united. and they summoned before the tribunal of Christ. Then shall they receive that awful sentence, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and bis angels, Mat. xxv. 41. Whereupon they shall go away into, everlasting punishment, ver. 49. They shall be eternally thut up in hell, never to get the least drop of comfort, nor the least ease of their torment. There they will be punished with the punishment of loss, being excommunicated for ever from the presence of God, his angels and faints. All means of grace, all hopes of a delivery, will be for ever cut off from their eyes. They will not have a drop of water to cool their tongues, Luke xiv. 24, 25. They will be punished with the punishment of sense. They must not only depart from God, but depart into fire, into everlasting fire. There the worm, that thall gnaw them, will never die; the fire, that will fcorch them, shall never be quenched. God will, through eternity, hold them up with the one hand, and pour the full vials of wrath into them with the other.

This is that state of wrath which natural men live in; being under much of the wrath of God, and liable to more. But, for a further view of it, let us confider the qualities of that wrath. (1.) It is irrefiftible, there is no standing before it; Who may stand in thy sight, when once thou art angry! Pial. lxxxvi. 7. Can the worm or moth defend themselves against him that designs to crush them? Much less can the worm man stand before an angry God. Foolish man, indeed, practically bids defiance to Heaven. But the Lord often, even in this world, opens fuch fluices of wrath upon them, as all their might cannot stop; and they are carried away thereby, as with a flood. How much more will it be so in hell! (2.) It is insupportable. What a man cannot resist, he will try to endure: but, who shall dwell in devouring fire? who shall dwell with everlast-

ing burnings? God's wrath is a weight that will fink men into the lowest hell. It is a burden which no man is able to fland under. A wounded spirit who can bear? Prev. xviii. 14. (3.) It is unavoidable to such as go on impenitently, and die in their finful course. He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy, Prov. xxix. I. We may now flee from it indeed, by fleeing to Jefus Christ: but such as slee from Christ will never be able to avoid it. Whither can men flee from the avenging God? where will they find a shelter? The hills will not hear them. The mountains will be deaf to their loudest cries: when they cry to them, to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. (4.) It is powerful and fierce wrath, Pfal. xc. 11. Who knoweth the power of thine auger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. We are apt to fear the wrath of man more than we ought: but no man can apprehend the wrath of God to be more dreadful than it really is; the power of it can never be known to the utmost; for it is infinite, and (properly speaking) has no utmost. How sierce soever it be, either on earth, or in hell, God can still carry it further. Every thing in God is most perfect in its kind; and therefore no wrath fo fierce as his. O finner! how wilt thou be able to endure that wrath, which will tear thee in pieces! Pfal. l. 22. and grind thee to powder! Luke xx. 18. The history of the two she-bears, that tare the children of Bethel, is an awful one, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24. but the united force of the rage of the lions, leopards, and she-bears, bereaved of their whelps, is not sufficient to give us even a faint idea of the power of the wrath of God, Hof. xiii. 7,8. Therefore Iwill be unto them as a lion; as a leopard by the way will I observe them. I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, &c. (5.) It is penetrating and piercing wrath. It is burning wrath, and fiery indignation. There is no pain more exquisite than that which is caused by fire; and no fire so piercing as the fire of God's indignation, that burns unto the lowest hell, Deut. xxxii. 22. The arrows of men's wrath can pierce fiesh, blood, and bones; but cannot reach the

foul: but the wrath of God will fink into the foul, and so pierce a man in the most tender part: like as, when a person is thunder-struck, oft-times there is not awound to be feen in the skin; yet life is gone, and the bones are, as it were, melted: fo God's wrath can penetrate into, and melt a man's foul within him, when his earthly comforts stand about him entire, and untouched; as in Belshazzar's case, Dan. v. 6. (6.) It is constant wrath, running parallel with the man's continuance in an unregenerate state; constantly attending him, from the womb to the grave. There are few days fo dark, but the fun fometimes looks out from under the clouds: but the wrath of God is an abiding cloud on the objects of it, John iii. 36. The wrath of God abideth on him that believes not. (7.) It is eternal. O, miserable soul! If thou flee not from this wrath, unto Jefus Christ, though thy mifery had a beginning, yet it will never have an end. Should devouring death wholly fwallow thee up, and for ever hold thee fast in a grave, it would be kind: but thy body must be re-united to thy immortal foul, and live again, and never die; that thou mayest be ever dying, in the hands of the living God. Cold death will quench the flame of men's wrath against us, if nothing else do: but God's wrath, when it has come on the finner millions of ages, will still be the wrath to come, Mat. iii. 7. 1 Theff. i. 10. as the water of a river is still coming, how much soever of it has passed. While God is, he will pursue the quarrel. Lastly, However dreadful it is, and though it be eternal, yet it is most just wrath. It is a clear fire, without the least smoke of injustice. The sea of wrath, raging with greatest fury against the sinner, is clear as chrystal. The Judge of all the earth can do no wrong: he knows no transports of passion, for they are inconsistent with the perfection of his nature. Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid; for then, how shall God judge the world? Rom. iii. 5. 6.

The Doctrine of the State of Wrath confirmed and vindicated.

II. I shall confirm the doctrine. Consider, (1) How peremptory the threatening of the first covenant is: In

the day thou eatest thereof-thou shalt surely die, Gen. iii. 17. Hereby fin and punishment being connected, the veracity of God ascertains the execution of the threatening. Now, all men being by nature under this covenant, the breach of it lays them under the curse. (2.) The justice of God requires, that a child of fin be a child of wrath; that the law being broken, the fanction thereof should take place. God cannot but doright, Gen. xviii. 25. Now it is a righteous thing with God to recompence fin with wrath, 1 Thess. i. 6. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, Hab. i. 13. And be hates all the workers of iniquity, Pfal. v. 6. (3.) The horrors of a natural conscience prove this. Conscience, in the breafts of men, tells them that they are finners, and therefore liable to the wrath of God. Let men, at any time, foberly commune with themselves, and they will find that they have the witness in themselelves, knowing the judgment of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death, Rom. i. 32. (4.) The pangs of the new birth, the work of the Spirit on elect fouls, in order to their conversion, demonstrate this. Hereby their natural finfulness and misery, as liable to the wrath of God, are plainly taught them, filling their hearts with fear of that wrath. As it is the Spirit's work to convince of fin, righteousness, and judgment, (John xvi. 8.) this testimony must needs be true; for the Spirit of truth cannot witness an untruth. But true believers, being freed from the state of wrath, receive not the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but receive the Spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15. Therefore, if fears of that nature arife, after the foul's union with Christ, they come from the faint's own spirit, or from a worse. Lastly, The sufferings of Christ plainly prove this doctrine. Wherefore was the Son of God a Son under wrath, but because the children of men were children of wrath? He fuffered the wrath of God; not for himself, but for those that were liable to it in their own persons. this not only shews us to have been liable to wrath; but also that wrath must have a vent, in the punishing of fin. If this was done in the green tree, what will become of the dry? What a miferable case must a sinner be in, that is out of Christ; that is not vitally united to Christ, and partakes not of his Spirit? God, who spared not his own Son, surely will not spare such an one.

But the unregenerate man, who has no great value for the honour of God, will be apt to rife up against his Judge, and in his own heart condemn his procedure. Nevertheless, the Judge being infinitely just, the sentence must be righteous. Therefore, to stop thy mouth, O proud finner! and to still thy clamour against thy righteous Judge, confider, First, Thou art a finner by nature; and it is highly reasonable, that guilt and wrath be as old as fin. Why should not God begin to vindicate his honour, as foon as vile worms attempt to impair it? Why shall not a serpent bite a thief, as soon as he leaps over the hedge? Why should not the threatening take hold of the finner, as foon as he casts away the command? The poisonous nature of the serpent affords a man fufficient ground to kill it, as foon as ever he can reach it: and by this time thou mayest be convinced, that thy nature is a very compound of enmity against God. Secondly, Thou hast not only enmity against God in thy nature, but hast discovered it by actual fins, which are in his eye acts of hostility. Thou hast brought forth thy lusts into the field of battle against thy fovereign Lord. And because thou art such a criminal, thy condemnation is just: for, besides the fin of thy nature, thou hast done that against Heaven, which if thou hadst done against men, thy life must have gone for it; and shall not wrath from heaven overtake thee? (1.) Thou art guilty of high treason and rebellion against the King of heaven. The thought and wish of thy heart, which he knows as well as the language of thy mouth, has been, No God, Psal. xiv. 1. Thou hast rejected his government, blown the trumpet, and set up the standard of rebellion against him, being one of those that say, We will not have this man to reign over us, Luke xix. 14. Thou hast striven against, and quenched his Spirit; practically disowned his laws, proclaimed by his meffengers; stopped thine ears at their voice, and fent them away mourning for thy pride.

Thou hast conspired with his grand enemy, the devil. Although thou art a fervant of the King of glory, daily receiving of his favours, and living on his bounty, thou art holding a correspondence, and hast contracted a friendship, with his greatest enemy, and art acting for him against thy Lord; for the lusts of the devil you will do, John viii. 44. (2.) Thou art a murderer before the Lord. Thou hast laid the stumbling-block of thine iniquity before the blind world; and hast ruined the fouls of others, by thy finful course. Though thou dost not see now, the time may come, when thou shalt fee the blood of thy relations, neighbours, acquaintances, and others, upon thy head, Mat. xviii. 7. Wo unto the world because of offences—We to that man by whom the offence cometh. Yea, thou art a felf-murderer before God, Prov. viii. 36. He that sinneth against me, verongeth his own foul: all they that hate me, love death. Ezek. viii. 31. Why will ye die? The laws of men go as far as they can against the self-murderer, denying his body a burial-place with others, and confifcating his. goods: what wonder is it, that the law of God is fo fevere against soul-murderers? Is it strange, that they who will needs depart from God now, cost what it will, should be forced to depart from him at last, into everlafting fire? But, what is yet more criminal, thou art guilty of the murder of the Son of God; for the Lord will reckon thee amongst those that pierced him, Rev. i. 7. Thou hast rejected him, as the Jews did; and by thy rejecting him thou hast justified their deed. They indeed did not acknowledge him to be the Son of God, but thou dost. What they did against him, was in his flate of humiliation; but thou hast acted against him in his state of exaltation. These things will aggravate thy condemnation. What wonder, then, if the voice of the Lamb change to the roaring of the lion, against the traitor and murderer?

Object. But some will say, Is there not a vast disproportion between our sin, and that wrath you talk of? I answer, No; God punisheth no more than the sinner descrees. To rectify your mistake, in this matter, consider, (1.) The vast rewards which God has annexed

to obedience. His word is no more full of fiery wrath against sin, than it is of gracious rewards to the obedience it requires. If heaven be in the promises, it is altogether equal that hell should be in the threatenings. If death were not in the balance with life, eternal mifery with eternal happiness, where were the proportion? Moreover, fin deserves the misery, but our best works do not deserve the happiness: yet both are set before us; fin and mifery, holiness and happiness. What reason is there then to complain? (2.) How severe soever the threatenings be, yet all have enough to do to reach the end of the law. Fear him, fays our Lord, which, after be bath killed, bath power to cast into bell: yea, I fay unto you, fear him, Luke xii. 5. This bespeaks our dread of divine power and majesty; yet how few fear him indeed! The Lord knows the hearts of finners to be exceedingly intent upon fulfilling their lufts: they cleave fo fondly to these fulsome breasts, that a small force does not suffice to draw them away from them. They that travel through defarts, where they are in hazard from wild beafts, have need to carry fire along with them; and they have need of a hard wedge that have knotty timber to cleave: so a holy law must be fenced with dreadful wrath, in a world lying in wickedness. But who are they that complain of that wrath as too great, but those to whom it is too little to draw them off from their finful courses? It was the man who pretended to fear his lord, because he was an austere man, that kept his pound laid up in a napkin: and fo he was condemned out of his own mouth, Luke xix. 20, 21, 22. Thou art that man, even thou whose objection I am answering. How can the wrath which thou art under, and liable to, be too great, when, as yet, is is not sufficient to awaken thee to flee from it? Is it time to relax the penalties of the law, when men are trampling the commands of it under foot? (3.) Confider how God dealt with his own Son, whom he spared not, Rom. viii. 32. The wrath of God feized on his foul and body both, and brought him into the dust of death. That his fufferings were not eternal, flowed from the quality of the Sufferer, who was infinite; and there-

fore able to bear, at once, the whole load of wrath: and, upon that account, his fufferings were infinite in value. But as the fufferings of a mere creature cannot be infinite in value, they must be protracted to eternity. And what confidence can a rebel subject have to quarrel with his part of a punishment executed on the king's fon? (4.) The finner doth against God what he can. thou hast done evil things as thou couldst, Jer. iii. 5. That thou hast not done more, and worse, thanks to him who restrained thee; to the chain which the wolf was kept in by, not to thyself. No wonder that God shews his power on the finner, who puts forth his power against God, as far as it will reach. The unregenerate man puts no period to his finful course; and would put no bounds to it neither, if he were not restrained by divine power, for wife ends: therefore it is just that he be for ever under wrath. (5.) It is infinite majesty which fin strikes against; and so it is, in some fort, an infinite evil. Sin rifeth in its demerit, according to the quality of the party offended. If a man wound his neighbour, his goods must go for it; but if he wound his prince, his life must go for that. The infinity of God makes infinite wrath the just demerit of fin. God is infinitely displeased with sin: and when he acts, he must act like himself, and shew his displeasure, by proportionable means. Lastly, Those that shall lie for ever under his wrath, will be eternally finning; and therefore must eternally fuffer: not only in respect of divine judicial procedure; but because sin is its own punishment, in the fame manner as holy obedience is its own reward.

The Doctrine of the Misery of Man's natural State applied.

Use (1.) Of information. Is our state by nature a state of wrath? Then,

1. Surely we are not born innocent. Those chains of wrath, which by nature are upon us, shew us to be born criminals. The swalling-bands, wherewith infants are bound hand and foot, as soon as they are born, may put us in mind of the cords of wrath, with which they are held prisoners, as children of wrath.

2. What desperate madness is it, for sinners to go on in their sinful course! What is it but to heap coals of

fire on thine own head! to lay more and more fuel to the fire of wrath! to treasure up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 5. Thou mayest perish, when bis wrath is kindled but a little, Pfal. ii. 12. Why wilt thou increase it yet more? Thou art already bound with fuch cords of death, as cannot easily be loosed: What need is there of more? Stand, careless sinner, and confider this.

3. Thou hast no reason to complain, as long as thou art out of hell. Wherefore doth a living man complain? Lam. iii. 39. If one, who has forfeited his life, be banished his native country, and exposed to many hardships; he may well bear all patiently, seeing his life is spared. Do you murmur, because you are under pain and fickness? Nay, bless God you are not there where the worm never dieth. Dost thou grudge, that thou art not in so good a condition in the world as some of thy neighbours are? Be thankful, rather, that you are not in the case of the damned. Is thy substance gone from thee? wonder that the fire of God's wrath hath not confumed thy felf. Kiss the rod, O sinner! and acknowledge mercy; for God punisheth us less than our iniquities deserve, Ezra ix. 13.

4. Here is a memorandum, both for poor and rich. (1.) The poorest that go from door to door, and had not one penny left them by their parents, were born to an inheritance. Their first father Adam left them children of wrath: and, continuing in their natural state, they cannot miss of it: for this is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed to him by God, Job xx. 29. An heritage that will furnish them with a habitation, who have not where to lay their head; they shall be cast into utter darkness, Mat. xxv. 30. for to them is referved the blackness of darkness for ever, Jude 13. where their bed shall be forrow; they shall lie down in forrow, Isa. 1. 11. their food shall be judgment; for God will feed them with judgment, Ez. xxxiv. 16. and their drink shall be the red wine of God's wrath, the dregs whereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring out, and drink them, Pfal. lxxv. 8. I know that those who are destitute of worldly goods, and withal void of the

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knowledge and grace of God, who therefore may be called the devil's poor, will be apt to fay here, "We hope God will make us fuffer all our mifery in this world, and that we shall be happy in the next:" as if their miserable outward condition, in time, would secure their happiness in eternity. A gross and fatal mistake! There is another inheritance which they have, viz. Lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit; Jer. xvi. 19. but the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, Isa. xxviii. 17. Dost thou think, O sinner! that God, who commands judges on earth not to respect the person of the poor in judgment, Lev. xix. 15. will pervert judgment for thee? Nay, know for certain, that however miserable thou art here, thou shalt be eternally miserable hereafter, if thou livest and diest in thy hatural state. (2.) Many that have enough in the world; have far more than they know of. Thou hast (it may be), O unregenerate man! an estate, a good portion, a large stock left thee by thy father; thou hast im-proved it, and the sun of prosperity shines upon thee; so that thou canst say with Esau, Gen. xxxiii. 9. I have enough. But know, thou hast more than all that, an inheritance thou dost not think of: thou art a child of wrath, an heir of hell. That is an heritage which will abide with thee, amidst all the changes in the world, as long as thou continuest in an unregenerate state. When thou she't leave thy substance to others, this shall go along with thee into another world. It is no wonder that a flaughter-ox is fed to the full, and is not toiled as others are; Job xxi. 30. The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath. Well then, Rejoice, let thine heart cheer thee, walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the fight of thine eyes. Live above reproofs and warnings from the word of God; shew thyself a man of a fine spirit, by casting off all fear of God; mock at serious ness, live like thyself, a child of wrath, an heir of hell: But know thou, that for all these things God shall bring thee in to judgment, Eccl. xi. 9. Affure thyself, thy breaking shall come suddenly at an instant, Ifa. xxx. 13. For, as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of a fool,

Eccl. vii. 6. The fair blaze, and the great noise which they make, is quickly gone: so shall thy mirth be. Then that wrath, that is now silently sinking into thy

foul, shall make a fearful hissing.

5. Wo to him that, like Moab, hath been at ease from his youth, Jer. xlviii. 11. and never saw the black cloud of wrath hanging over his head. There are many who have no changes, therefore they fear not God, Psall lv. 19. They have lived in a good belief (as they call it) all their days; that is, they never had power to believe an ill report of their soul's state. Many have come by their religion too easily: and as it came lightly to them, so it will go from them, when the trial comes. Do you think men slee from wrath in a morning dream? Or will they slee from the wrath they never saw pursuing them?

6. Think it not strange, if you see one in great distress about his soul's condition, who was wont to be as jovial, and as little concerned for salvation as any of his neighbours. Can one get a right view of himself, as in a state of wrath, and not be pierced with forrows, terrors, and anxiety? When a weight, quite above a man's strength lies on him, and he is alone, he can neither stir hand nor foot; but, when one comes to lift it off him, he will struggle in getting from under it. Thunder-claps of wrath from the word of God, conveyed to the soul by the Spirit of the Lord, will surely

keep a man awake.

Lastly, It is no wonder that wrath come upon churches and nations, and upon us in this land, and that infants and children yet unborn smart under it. Most of the society are yet children of wrath; sew are sleeing from it, or taking the way to prevent it; but people of all ranks are helping it on. The Jews rejected Christ; and their children have been smarting under wrath these sixteen hundred years. God grant that the bad entertainment given to Christ and his gospel, by this generation, be not pursued with wrath on the succeeding one.

Use 2. Of exhortation. Here, (1.) I shall drop a word to those who are yet in an unregenerate state.

The Misery of Man's natural State. State II. (2.) To those who are brought out of it. (3.) To all

indifferently.

I. To you that are yet in an unregenerate state, I would found the alarm, and warn you to see to yourselves, while there is yet hope. O you children of wrath, take no rest in this dismal state; but slee to Christ, the only refuge: haste, and make your escape thither. The state of wrath is too hot a climate for you to live in, Micah ii. 10. Arije ye, and depart, for this is not your rest. O sinner, knowest thou where thou art? Dost thou not fee thy danger? The curse has entred into thy soul. Wrath is thy covering: the heavens are growing blacker and blacker above thy head: the earth is weary of thee, the pit is opening her mouth for thee; and should the thread of thy life be cut this moment, thou art thenceforth past all hope for ever. Sirs, if we faw you putting a cup of poison to your mouth, we should flee to you, and fnatch it out of your hands. If we faw the house on fire about you, while you were fast asleep in it, we would run to you and drag you out of, it. But alas! you are in ten thousand times greater hazard: yet we can do no more, than tell you your danger; invite, exhort, and befeech you, to look to yourselves; and lament your stupidity and obstinancy, when we cannot prevail with you to take warning. If there were no hope of your recovery, we should be filent, and would not torment you before the time: but though you be lost and undone, there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Wherefore, I cry unto you, in the name of the Lord, and in the words of the prophet, Zech. ix. 12. Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope. Flee to Jefus Christ, out of this your natural state.

Motive 1. While you are in this state, you must stand or fall according to the law, or covenant of works. If you understood this aright, it would strike through your hearts as a thousand darts. One had better be a slave to the Turks, condemned to the gallies, or under Egyptian bondage, than be under the covenant of works now. All mankind were brought under it in Adam, as we heard before; and thou, in thy unregenerate state, art still where Adam left thee. It is true, there is

another covenant brought in: but what is that to thee, who art not brought into it? Thou must needs be under one of the two covenants; either under the law, or under grace. That thou art not under grace, the dominion of sin over thee manifestly evinceth; therefore thou art under the law, Rom. vi. 14. Do not think God has laid aside the first covenant, Mat. v. 17, 18. Gal. iii. 10. No, he will magnify the law, and make it bonourable. It is broken, indeed, on thy part; but it is absurd to think, that therefore your obligation is dissolved. Nay, thou must stand and fall by it, till thou canst produce thy discharge from God himself, who is the party in that covenant; and this thou canst

not pretend to, seeing thou art not in Christ.

Now, to give you a view of your misery, in this re-spect, consider these following things: (1.) Hereby you are bound over to death, in virtue of the threatening of death in the covenant, Gen. ii. 17. the condition being broken, you fall under the penalty. So it concludes you under wrath. (2.) There is no falvation for you under this covenant, but on a condition impossible to be performed by you. The justice of God must be satisfied for the wrong which you have done already. God has written this truth in characters of the blood of his own Son. Yea, and you must perfectly obey the law for the time to come. So faith the law, Gal. iii: 12. The man that doth them, shall live in them. Come, then, O finner! see if thou canst make a ladder, whereby thou mayest reach the throne of God: stretch forth thine arms, and try if thou canst flee on the wings of the wind, catch hold of the clouds, and pierce through these visible heavens; and then either climb over, or break through, the jasper walls of the city above. These things thou mayest do, as well as be able to reach heaven, in thy natural state, or under this covenant. (3.) There is no pardon under this covenant. Pardon is the benefit of another covenant, with which thou hast nothing to do, Acts xiii. 39. By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. As for thee, thou art in the hand of a merciles credi-

tor, who will take thee by the throat, faying, Pay what thou owest; and cast thee into prison, there to remain till thou hast paid the utmost farthing: unless thou be fo wife as to get a furety in time, who is able to anfwer for all thy debt, and get up thy discharge. This Jesus Christ alone can do. Thou abidest under this covenant, and pleadest mercy: but what is thy plea founded on? There is not one promise of mercy or pardon in that covenant. Dost thou plead mercy for mercy's fake? Justice will step in between it and thee; and plead God's covenant-threatening, which he cannot deny. (4.) There is no place for repentance in this covenant, so as the finner can be helped by it. For as foon as ever thou finnest, the law lays its curfe on thee, which is a dead weight that thou can't by no means throw off; no, not though thine head were waters, and thine eyes a fountain of tears, to weep day and night for thy fin. That is what the law cannot do, in that it is weak through the flesh, Rom. viii. 3. Thou art another profane Esau, that hast fold the bleffing; and there is no place for repentance, though you feek it carefully with tears, while under that covenant. (5.) There is no acceptance of the will for the deed under this covenant, which was not made for good will, but good works. The mistake in this point ruins many. They are not in Christ, but stand under the first covenant; yet they will plead this privilege. This is just like a man's having made a feast for those of his own family; and when they fit down at table, another man's fervant, that has run away from his mafter, prefumptuoufly comes forward, and fits down among them: would not the mafter of the feaft give fuch a stranger that check, Friend, how camest thou in hither? And, fince he is none of his family, command him to be gone quickly? Though a mafter accept the good will of his own child for the deed, can a hired fervant expect that privilege? (6.) You have nothing to do with Christ, while under that covenant. By the law of God, a woman cannot be married to two husbands at once: either death or divorce must dissolve the first marriage, ere the can marry another. So we must first be dead to

the law, ere we can be married to Christ, Rom. vii. 4. The law is the first husband; Jesus Christ, who raiseth the dead, marries the widow, that was heart-broken, and flain by the first husband. But while the soul is in the house with the first husband, it cannot plead a marriage-relation to Christ; nor the benefits of a marriagecovenant, which is not yet entered into, Gal. v. 4. Christ is become of no effect to you; who soever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace. Peace, pardon, and fuch like benefits, are all benefits of the covenant of grace. You must not think to stand off from Christ, and the marriage-covenant with him, and yet plead these benefits; more than one man's wife can plead the benefit of a contract of marriage past between another man and his wife. Laftly, See the bill of exclusion, passed in the court of heaven, against all under the covenant of works, Gal. iv. 30. The fon of the bond-woman shall not be heir. Compare ver. 24. Heirs of wrath must not be heirs of glory. Whom the first covenant has power to exclude out of heaven, the fecond covenant cannot bring in to it.

Objection. Then it is impossible for us to be faved: Answer. It is so, while you are in that state. But if you would be out of that dreadful condition, hasten out of that state. If a murderer be under sentence of death, so long as he lives within the kingdom, the laws will reach his life: but if he can make his escape, and go over the sea, into the dominions of another prince our laws cannot reach him there. This is what we would have you to do: slee out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son; out of the dominion of the law, into the dominion of grace: then all the curses of the law, or covenant of works,

shall never be able to reach you.

Motive 2. O ye children of wrath, your state is wretched, for you have lost God, and that is an unspeakable loss. You are without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. Whatever you may call yours, you cannot call God yours. If we look to the earth, perhaps you can tell us, that land, that house, or that herd of cattle, is yours. But let us look upward to heaven; is that

God, that grace, that glory, yours? Truly, you have neither part nor lot in this matter. When Nebuchadnezzar talks of cities and kingdoms, O how big does he speak; Great Babylon that I have built-my powermy majesty: but he tells a poor tale, when he comes to speak of God, saying, Your God, Dan. ii. 47. and iv. 30. Alas, finner, whatever thou hast, God is gone from thee. O the mifery of a godless foul! Hast thou loft God? Then, (1.) The fap and substance of all thou hast in the world is gone. The godless man, have what he will, is 'one that hath not, Mat. xxv. 29. I defy the unregenerate man to attain to foul-fatisfaction whatever he possesseth; since God is not his God. All his days he eateth in darkness: in every condition there is a fecret diffatisfaction haunts his heart, like a ghost: the foul wants fomething, though perhaps it knoweth not what it is; and so it will be always, till the foul return to God, the fountain of fatisfaction. (2.) Thou canst do nothing to purpose for thyself; for God is gone, his foul is departed from thee, Jer. vi. 8. like a leg out of joint, hanging by, whereof a man has no use, as the word there used doth bear. Losing God, thou hast lost the fountain of good; and so all grace, all goodness, all the saving influences of his Spirit. What canst thou do then? What fruit canst thou bring forth, more than a branch cut off from the stock? John xv. 5. Thou art become unprofitable, Rom. iii. 12. as a filthy rotten thing, fit only for the dunghill. (3.) Death has come up into thy windows, yea, and has fettled on thy face; for God, in whose favour is life, Psal. xxx. 5. is gone from thee, and so the soul of thy soul is departed. What a loathfome lump is the body, when the foul is gone! Far more loathfome is thy foul in this cafe. Thou art dead while thou livest. Do not deny it, seeing thy speech is laid, thine eyes closed, and all spiritual motion in thee ceaseth. Thy true friends, who fee thy cafe, lament; because thou art gone into the land of filence. (4.) Thou hast not a steady friend among all the creatures of God; for now thou hast lost the master's favour, all the family is set against thee. Conscience is thine enemy: the word never

fpeaks good of thee: God's people loath thee, so far as they fee what thou art, Pfal. xv. 4. The beafts and stones of the field are banded together against thee, Job v. 23. Hof. ii. 18. Thy meat, drink, and cloaths, grudge to be ferviceable to the wretch that has loft God, and abuseth them to his dishonour. The earth groaneth under thee; yea, the whole creation groaneth, and travelleth in pain together, because of thee, and such as thou art, Lam. viii. 22. Heaven will have nothing to do with thee; for there shall in no wife enter into it any thing that defileth, Rev. xxi. 27. Only hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming, Ifa. xiv. 9. Lastly, Thy hell is begun already. What makes hell, but exclusion from the presence of God? Depart from me, ye curled. You are gone from God already, with the curse upon you. That which is now your choice, shall be your punishment at length, if you turn not. As a gracious state is a state of glory in the bud; so a gracelets state is hell in the bud, which, if it continue, will come at length to perfection.

Motive 3. Confider the dreadful inflances of the wrath of God; and let them ferve to awaken thee, to flee out of this state. Consider, (1.) How it has fallen on men. Even in this world, many have been fet up as monuments of divine vengeance, that others might fear. Wrath has swept away multitudes, who have fallen together by the hand of an angry God. Confider how the Lord spared not the old avorld, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly. And turning the cities of Sodom and Gemorrub into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly, 2 Pct. ii. 5, 6. But it is yet more dreadful to think of that weeping, wailing, and gnathing of teeth, among those who in hell lift up their eyes, but cannot get a drop of water to cool their tongues. Believe these things, and be warned by them, lest destruction come upon thee, for a warning to others. (2.) Consider how wrath fell upon the fallen angels, whose case is absolutely hopeless. They were the first that ventured to break the hedge of the divine

wrath against sin. They once left their own habitation, and were never allowed to look in again at the hole of the door; but they are referved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day, Jude, ver. 6. Lafily, Behold how an angry God dealt with his own Son, standing in the room of elect sinners, Rom, viii. 32. God spared not his over Son. Sparing mercy might have been expected, if any at all. If any person could have obtained it, furely his own Son would have got it: but he spared him not. The Father's delight is made a man of forrows: he who is the wildom of God, becomes fore amazed, ready to faint away in a fit of horror. The weight of this wrath makes him fweat great drops of blood. By the fierceness of this fire, his heart was like wax melted in the midst of his bowels. Behold, here, how fevere God is against fin! The fun was struck blind with this terrible fight, rocks were rent, graves opened, death, as it were, in the excess of astonishment, letting its prisoners slip away. What is a deluge, a shower of fire and brimstone on Sodomites, the terrible noise of a dissolving world, the whole fabric of heaven and earth falling down at once, and angels cast down from heaven into the bottomless pit! What are all thefe, I tay, in comparison with this, God suffering! groaning! dying on a cross! Infinite holiness did it, to make fin look like itself, viz. infinitely odious. And will men live at ease, while exposed to this wrath?

Lastly, Consider what a God he is, with whom thou hast to do, and whose wrath thou art liable unto. He is the God of infinite knowledge and wisdom: so that none of thy sins, however secret, can be hid from him. He infallibly finds out all means, whereby wrath may be executed, toward the satisfying of justice. He is of infinite power, and so can do what he will against the sinner. How heavy must the strokes of wrath be, which are laid on by the omnipotent hand! Infinite power can make the sinner prisoner, even when he is in his greatest rage against heaven. It can bring again the several parcels of dust, out of the grave, put them together again, re-unite the soul and body, summon them before the tribunal, hurry them away to the pit, and hold them

up with the one hand, through eternity, while they are lashed with the other. He is infinitely just, and therefore must punish; it were acting contrary to his nature to fuffer the finner to escape wrath. Hence the executing of this wrath is pleasing to him: for though the Lord hath no delight in the death of a finner, as it is the destruction of his own creature; yet he delights in it, as it is the execution of justice. Upon the wicked be shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an borrible tempest. Mark the reason; For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, Psal. xi. 6, 7. I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted, Ezek. v. 13. I alfo will laugh at your calamity, Prov. i. 26. Finally, he lives for ever, to pursue the quarrel. Let us therefore conclude, It is a fearful thing to fall into, the hands of the

living God.

Be awakened, then, O young finner! be awakened, O old finner! who art yet in the state thou wast born in! Your fecurity is none of God's allowance; it is the fleep of death: rife out of it, ere the pit close its mouth upon you. It is true, you may put on a breaftplate of iron, make your brow brass, and your heart as an adamant: and who can help it? But God will break that brazen brow, and make that adamantine heart, at last, to fly into a thousand pieces. You may, if you will, labour to put these things out of your heads, that you may yet fleep in a found skin, though in a state of wrath. You may run away, with the arrows flicking in your consciences, to your work, to work them away; or to your beds, to fleep them out; or to company, to fport and laugh them away: but convictions, so stifled, will have a fearful resurrection; and the day is coming, when the arrows of wrath shall fo flick in thy foul, as thou shalt never be able to pluck them out through the ages of eternity, unless thou take warning in time.

But, if any defire to flee from the wrath to come; and, for that end, to know what course to take, I offer them these few advices; and implore and beseech them, as they love their own fouls, to fall in with them. (1.) Retire in some secret place, and there meditate on

this your mifery. Believe it, and fix your thoughts on it. Let each put the question to himself, How can I live in this state? How can I die in it? How shall I rife again, and ftand before the tribunal of God in it? (2.) Consider seriously the sin of your nature, heart, and life. A proper fight of wrath flows from a deep fense of fin. They who see themselves exceeding fin. ful, will find no great difficulty to perceive themselves to be heirs of wrath. (3.) Labour to justify God in this matter. To quarrel with God about it, and to rage like a wild bull in a net, will but fix you the more in it. Humiliation of foul, before the Lord, is necessary for an escape. God will not sell deliverance, but freely gives it to those who see themselves altogether unworthy of his favour. Lastly, Turn your eyes, O prisoners of hope, towards the Lord Jesus Christ; and embrace him, as he offereth himself in the gospel. There is no salvation in any other, Acts iv. 12. God is a consuming fire; you are children of wrath; if the Mediator interpose not between him and you, you are undone for ever. If you would be safe, come under his shadow: one drop of that wrath cannot fall there, for he delivereth us from the wrath to come, I Thess. i. 10. Accept of him in his covenant, wherein he offereth himfelf to thee: fo thou shalt, as the captive woman, redeem thy life, by marrying the Conqueror. His blood will quench that fire of wrath which burns against thee: in the white raiment of his righteousness thou wilt be fafe; for no storm of wrath can pierce it.

II. I shall drop a few words to the faints.

First, Remember—that at that time (namely, when you were in your natural state) ye were without Christ—having no hope, and without God in the world. Call to mind that state you were in formerly; and review the misery of it. There are five memorandums which I may thence give in to the whole assembly of the saints, who are no more children of wrath; but heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ, though as yet in their minority: (1.) Remember, that in the day that our Lord took you by the hand, you were in no better a condition than others. O! what moved him to take you, when

he paffed by your neighbours! He found you children of wrath, even as others; but he did not leave you fo. He came into the common prison, where you lay in your fetters, even as others: from amongst the multitude of condemned malefactors he picked you out, commanded your fetters to be taken off, put a pardon in your hand, and brought you into the glorious liberty of the children of God, while he left others in the devil's fetters. (2.) Remember, there was nothing in you to engage him to love you, in the day that he first appeared for your deliverance. Ye were children of wrath, even as others; fit for hell, and altogether unfit for heaven: yet the King brought you into the palace; the King's Son made love to you, a condemned criminal, and espoused you to himself, on the day in which you might have been led forth to execution. Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight, Mat. ix. 26. (3.) Remember, ye were fitter to be loathed than loved in that day. Wonder, that when he saw you in your blood, he looked not at you with abhorrence, and paffed by you. Wonder, that ever fuch a time could be a time of love, Ezek. xvi. 8. (4.) Remember, you are decked with borrowed feathers. It is his comeliness which is upon you, ver. 14. It was he that took off your prison garments, and cloathed you with robes of righteousness, garments of salvation; garments wherewith you are arrayed as the lilies, which toil not, neither do they spin. He took the chains from off your arms, the rope from about your neck; put you in fuch a dress, as you might be fit for the court of heaven, even to eat at the King's table. (5.) Remember your faults this day, as Pharaoh's butler, who had forgotten Joseph. Mind how you have forgotten, and how unkindly you have treated him, who remembered you in your low cstate. Is this your kindness to your Friend? In the day of your deliverance, did you think you could have thus requited him, your Lord.

Secondly, Pity the children of wrath, the world that lies in wickedness. Can you be unconcerned for them, you who were once in the same condition? You have

got a-shore, indeed, but your fellows are yet in hazard of perishing; and will not you give them all possible help for their deliverance? What they are, you sometimes were. This may draw pity from you, and engage you to use all means for their recovery. See Tit.

iii. I, 2, 3. Thirdly, Admire that matchless love which brought you out of the state of wrath. Christ's love was active love; he brought thy foul from the pit of corruption. It was no eafy work to purchase the life of the condemned finner; but he gave his life for thy life. He gave his precious blood to quench that flame of wrath, which otherwise would have burnt thee up. Men get the best view of the stars from the bottom of a deep pit: from this pit of misery, into which thou wast cast by the first Adam, thou mayest get the best view of the Sun of Righteoufnets, in all his dimensions. He is the Second Adam, who took thee out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay. How broad were the skirts of that love, which covered such a multitude of fins! Behold the length of it, reaching from everlafting to everlasting, Psal. ciii. 17. The depth of it, going fo low as to deliver thee from the lowest hell, Pfal. lxxxvi. 13. The height of it, raifing thee up to fit in heavenly places, Eph. ii. 6.

Fourthly, Be humble, carry low fails, walk foftly all your years. Be not proud of your gifts, graces, privileges, or attainments: but remember you were children of wrath, even as others. The peacock walks flowly, hangs down his ftarry feathers, while he looks to his black feet. Look ye to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged, and walk humbly, as it becomes free

grace's debtors.

Lafily, Be wholly for your Lord. Every wife is obliged to be dutiful to her husband; but double ties lie upon her who was taken from a prison, or a dunghill. If your Lord has delivered you from wrath, you ought, on that very account, to be wholly his; to act for him, to suffer for him, and to do whatever he calls you to. The saints have no reason to complain of their lot in the world, whatever it be. Well may they bear

the cross for him, by whom the curse was borne away from them. Well may they bear the wrath of men in his cause, who has freed them from the wrath of God; and chearfully go to a fire for him, by whom hell fire is quenched as to them. Soul and body, and all thou hadft in the world, were fometimes under wrath: he has removed that wrath, shall not all these be at his service? That thy foul is not overwhelmed with the wrath of God, is owing purely to Jesus Christ: and shall it not then be a temple for his Spirit? That thy heart is not filled with horror and despair, is owing to him only; to whom then should it be devoted, but to him alone? That thine eyes are not blinded with the smoke of the pit, thy hands are not fettered with chains of darkness, thy tongue is not broiling in the fire of hell, and thy feet are not standing in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, is owing purely to Jesus Christ: and shall not these eyes be employed for him, these hands act for him, this tongue fpeak for him, and these feet speedily run his errands? To him who believes that he was a child of wrath, even as others, but is now delivered by the bleffed Jesus, nothing will appear too much, to do or fuffer for his Deliverer, when he has a fair call to it.

III. To conclude with a word to all. Let no man think lightly of fin, which lays the finner open to the wrath of God. Let not the fin of our nature, which wreaths the yoke of God's wrath fo early about our necks, seem a small thing in our eyes. Fear the Lord, because of his dreadful wrath. Tremble at the thoughts of fin, against which God has such fiery indignation. Look on his wrath, and stand in awe and fin not. Do you think this is to press you to slavish fear? if it were so, one had better be a flave to God with a trembling heart, than a free man to the devil, with a feared conscience, and a heart of adamant. But it is not so; you may love him, and thus fear him too; yea, you ought to do it, though you were faints of the first magnitude. See Pfal. cxix. 120. Matth. x. 28. Luke xii. 5. Heb. xii. 28, 29. Although you have past the gulph of wrath, being in Jesus Christ, yet it is but reasonable

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that your hearts should shiver when you look back to it. Your fin still deserves wrath, even as the sins of others: and it would be terrible to be in a fiery furnace, although, by a miracle, we were fo fenced against it, as that it could not harm us.

HEAD

Man's utter Inability to recover himself.

ROM. v. 6. For when ye were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

JOHN vi. 44. No man can come unto me, except the Father

which hath fent me draw him.

TE have now had a view of the total corruption of man's nature, and that load of wrath which lies on him, that gulph of mifery which he is plunged into in his natural state. But there is one part of his misery that deferves particular confideration; namely, his utter inability to recover himself, the knowledge of which is necessary for the due humiliation of a finner. I design here is, only to propose a few things, whereby to convince the unregenerate man of this his inability; that he may fee an absolute need of Christ; and of the

power of his grace.

As a man that has fallen into a pit, cannot be supposed to help himself out of it, but by one of two ways; either by doing all himself alone, or taking hold of, and improving the help offered him by others: fo an unconverted man cannot be supposed to help himself out of his natural state, but either in the way of the law, or covenant of works, by doing all himself without Christ; or else in the way of the gospel, or covenant of grace, by exerting his own strength to lay hold upon, and to make use of the help offered him by a Saviour. But alas! the unconverted man is dead in the pit, and cannot help himself either of these ways: not the first way; for the first text tells us, that when our Lord came to help us, we were without strength, unable to

recover ourselves. We were ungodly; therefore under a burden of guilt and wrath; yet without strength, unable to stand under it; and unable to throw it off, or get from under it: fo that all mankind had undoubtedly perished, had not Christ died for the ungodly, and brought help to them, who could never have recovered themselves. But when Christ comes and offereth help to finners, cannot they take it? Cannot they improve help, when it comes to their hands? No; the second text tells us, they cannot; No man can come unto me, (i. e. believe in me, John vii. 35.) except the Father draw him. This is a drawing which enables them to come, who, till then, could not come; and therefore could not help themselves, by improving the help offered. It is a drawing, which is always effectual: for it can be no less than hearing and learning of the Father, which whoever partakes of cometh to Christ, ver. 25. Therefore it is not drawing in the way of mere moral persuasion, which may be, yea, and always is, ineffectual. But it is drawing by mighty power, Eph. i. 19. absolutely necessary for them that have no power in themselves to come and take hold of the offered help.

Hearken then, O unregenerate man, and be convinced, that as thou art in a most miserable state by nature; so thou art utterly unable to recover thyself in any way. Thou art ruined: and what way wilt thou go to work, to recover thyself? Which of the two ways wilt thou choose? Wilt thou try it alone? Or wilt thou make use of help? Wilt thou fall on the way of works, or on the way of the gospel? I know very well, that thou wilt not so much as try the way of the gospel, till once thou hast found thy recovery impracticable in the way of the law. Therefore we shall begin where corrupt nature teaches men to begin, viz. at the way

of the law of works.

I. Sinner, I would have thee believe that thy working will never effect it. Work, and do thy best; thou wilt never be able to work thyself out of this state of corruption and wrath. Thou must have Christ, otherwise thou wilt perish eternally. It is only Christ in you

can be the hope of glory. But if thou wilt needs try it; then I must lay before thee, from the unalterable word of the living God, two things which thou must do for thyself. If thou canst do them, it must be yielded, that thou art able to recover thyfelf: but if not, then thou canst do nothing this way for thy recovery.

FIRST, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments, Mat. xix. 17. That is, if thou wilt by doing enter into life, then perfectly keep the ten commands; for the drift of these words is to beat down the pride of the man's heart, and to let him fee an absolute need of a Saviour, from the impossibility of keeping the law. The answer is given suitable to the address. Our Lord checks him for his compliment, Good Master, ver. 16. telling him, There is none good but one, that is God, ver. 17. As if he had faid, you think yourfelf a good man, and me another; but where goodness is Tpoken of, men and angels may vail their faces before the good God. As to his question, wherein he discovered his legal disposition, Christ does not answer him, faying, Believe and thou shalt be saved; that would not have been fo feafonable in the case of one who thought he could do well enough for himself, if he but knew what thing he should do; but suitable to the humour the man was in, he bids him keep the commandments; keep them nicely and accurately, as those that watch malefactors in prison, lest any of them escape, and their life go for theirs. See, then, O unregenerate man! what thou canst do in this matter; for if thou wilt recover thyself in this way, thou must perfectly keep the commandments of God.

(1.) Thy obedience must be perfect, in respect of the principle of it; that is, thy foul, the principle of action, must be perfectly pure, and altogether without fin; for the law requires all moral perfection; not only actual, but habitual: and fo condemns original fin; impurity of nature, as well as of actions. Now, if thou canst bring this to pass, thou shalt be able to answer that question of Solomon, so as never one of Adam's posterity could yet answer it, Prov. xx. 9. Who can say I have made my beart clean? But if thou canst not, the very want of this perfection is fin; and fo lays thee open to the curse, and cuts thee off from life. Yea, it makes all thine actions, even thy best actions, sinful: For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Job xiv. 4. And dost thou think by sin to help thyself out of sin and misery? (2.) Thy obedience must also be perfect in parts. It must be as broad as the whole law of God: if thou lackest one thing, thou art undone; for the law denounceth the curle on him that continueth not in every thing written therein, Gal. iii. 10. Thou must give internal and external obedience to the whole law; keep all the commands in heart and life. If thou breakest any one of them, that will infure thy ruin. A vain thought, or idle word, will still shut thee up under the curse. (3.) It must be perfect in respect of degrees; as was the obedience of Adam, while he stood in his innocence. This the law requires, and will accept of no less, Mat. xxii. 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy foul, and with all thy mind. If one degree of that love, required by the law, be wanting; if each part of thy obedience be not brought up to the greatest height commanded, that want is a breach of the law, and fo leaves thee still under the curse. A man may bring as many buckets of water to a house that is on fire as he is able to carry; and yet it may be confumed, and will be so, if he bring not as many as will quench the fire. Even so, although thou shouldst do what thou art able, in keeping the commands, yet if thou fail in the least degree of obedience, which the law enjoins, thou art certainly ruined for ever; unless thou take hold of Christ, renouncing all thy righteousness, as filthy grags. See Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 10. Lasily, It must be perpetual, as the man Christ's obedience was, who always did the things that pleafed the Father; for the tenor of the law is, Curfed is he that continueth not in all things written in the law, to do them. Hence, though Adam's obedience was, for a while, absolutely perfect; yet because at length he tripped in one point, viz. in eating the forbidden fruit, he fell under the curse of the law. If a man were to live a dutiful subject to his

Man's Inability to recover himself. State II.

prince, till the close of his days, and then conspire against him, he must die for his treason. Even so, though thou shouldst all the time of thy life, live in perfect obedience to the law of God, and yet at the hour of death only entertain a vain thought, or pronounce an ill word; that idle word, or vain thought, would blot out all thy former righteousness, and ruin thee; namely, in this way in which thou art seeking to recover thyself.

Now, fuch is the obedience which thou must perform, if thou wouldst recover thyself in the way of the law. But though thou shouldst thus obey, the law ftakes thee down in the state of wrath, till another de-

mand of it be fatisfied, viz.

SECONDLY, Thou must pay what thou owest. It is undeniable that thou art a finner: and whatever thou mayest be in time to come, justice must be satisfied for thy fin already committed. The honour of the law must be maintained, by thy suffering the denounced wrath. It may be thou haft changed thy course of life, or art now resolved to do it, and to set about keeping the commands of God: but what hast thou done, or what wilt thou do with the old debt? Your obedience to God, though it were perfect, is a debt due to him, for the time wherein it is performed; and can no more fatisfy for former fins, than a tenant's paying the current year's rent, can fatisfy the landlord for all arrears, Can the paying of new debts acquit a man from old accounts? Nay, deceive not yourselves, you will find these laid up in store with God, and sealed up among his treasures, Deut. xxxii. 34. It remains, then, that either thou must bear that wrath, to which for thy sin thou art liable according to the law; or else thou must acknowledge that thou canst not bear it, and thereupon have recourse to the Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me now ask thee, Art thou able to satisfy the justice of God? Canst thou pay thy own debt? furely not: for, as he is the infinite God, whom thou hast offended; the punishment, being suited to the quality of the offence, must be infinite. But thy punishment, or fufferings for fin, cannot be infinite in value, for thou art a finite creature: therefore they must be infinite in

duration or continuance; that is, they must be eternal. And so all thy sufferings in this world are but an earnest of what thou must suffer in the world to come.

Now, finner, if thou canst answer these demands, thou mayest recover thyself in the way of the law. But art thou not conscious of thy inability to do any of these things; much more to do them all? yet if thou do not all, thou dost nothing. Turn, then, to what course of life thou wilt, thou art still in a state of wrath. Screw up thy obedience to the greatest height thou canst; suffer what God lays upon thee, yea, add, if thou wilt, to the burden, and walk under all, without the least impatience: yet all this will not satisfy the demands of the law; therefore thou art still a ruined creature. Alas! finner, what art thou doing, while thou strivest to help thyself, but dost not receive, and unite with Jesus Christ? Thou art labouring in the fire, wearying thyfelf for very vanity; labouring to enter into heaven, by the door which Adam's sin so bolted, as neither he, nor any of his lost posterity, can ever enter in by it. Dost thou not see the slaming sword of justice, keeping thee off from the tree of life? Dost thou not hear the law denouncing a curse on thee, for all thou art doing; even for thy obedience, thy prayers, thy tears, thy reformation of life, and so on; because being under the law's dominion, thy best works are not fo good as it requires them to be? Believe it, firs, if you live and die out of Christ, without being actually united to him as the second Adam, the lifegiving Spirit, and without coming under the covert of his atoning blood; though you should do the utmost that any man on earth can do, in keeping the commands of God, you can never see the face of God in peace. If you should, from this moment, bid an eternal farewell to this world's joys, and all the affairs thereof; and henceforth bufy yourselves with nothing but the salvation of your souls; if you should go into fome wilderness, live upon the grass of the field, and be companions to dragons and owls; if you should re-tire to some dark cavern of the earth, and weep there for your fins, until you have wept yourselves blind, yea,

weep out all the moisture of your body; if you should confess with your tongue, until it cleave to the roof of your mouth; pray till your knees grow hard as horns; fast till your body become like a skeleton; and after all this, give it to be burnt; the word is gone out of the Lord's mouth in righteousness, and cannot return; that you shall perish for ever, notwithstanding all this, as not being in Christ, John xiv. 6. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me. Acts iv. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other. Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth not,

shall be damned. Object. But God is a merciful God, and he knows that we are not able to answer these demands: we hope therefore to be faved, if we do as well as we can, and keep the commands as well as we are able. Answer. (1.) Though thou art able to do many things; thou art not able to do one thing right: thou canst do nothing acceptable to God, being out of Christa John xv. 5. Without me ye can do nothing. An unrenewed man, as thou art, can do nothing but fin; as we have already proved. Thy best actions are sin, and so they increase thy debt to justice: how then can it be expected they should lessen it? (2.) Though God should offer to fave men, upon condition that they did all they could do in obedience to his commands, yet we have reason to think, that those who should attempt it, would never be faved: for where is the man that does as well as he can? Who fees not many false steps that he has made, which he might have avoided? There are so many things to be done, so many temptations to carry us out of the road of duty, and our nature is so very apt to be set on fire of hell, that we furely must fail, even in some point that it wishin the compass of our natural abilities. But, (3.) Though thou shouldst do all thou art able to do, in vain dost thou hope to be faved in that way. What word of God is this hope of thine founded on? It is neither founded on law nor gospel; therefore is but a delusion. It is not founded on the gospel; for the gospel leads the foul out of itself, to Jesus Christ for all; and it establisheth the law, Rom. iii. 31. Whereas this hope of

yours cannot be established, but on the ruins of the law, which God will magnify and make honourable. Hence it appears, that it is not founded on the law neither. When God fet Adam a-working for happiness for himself and his posterity, perfect obedience was the condition required of him; and the curse was denounced in case of disobedience. The law being broken by him, he and his posterity was subjected to the penalty, for fin committed; and withal still bound to perfect obedience: for it is abfurd to think, that man's finning, and fuffering for his fin, should free him from his duty of obedience to his Creator. When Christ came in the room of the elect, to purchase their falvation, the terms were the same. Justice had the elect under arrest: if he is desirous to deliver them, the terms are known. He must satisfy for their sin, by suffering the punishment due to it: he must do what they cannot do, to wit, obey the law perfectly; and fo fulfil all righteousness. Accordingly all this he did, and to became the end of the law for righteousues, to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 4. And dost thou think that God will abate of these terms as to thee, when his own Son got no abatement of them? Expect it not, though thou shouldst beg it with tears of blood; for if they prevailed, they must prevail against the truth, justice, and honour of God, Gal. iii. 10. Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them. Verie 22. The law is not of faith, but the man that doth them shall live in them. It is true, that God is merciful: but cannot he be merciful, unless he saves you in a way that is neither consistent with his law, nor his gospel? Hath not his goodness and mercy sufficiently appeared, in sending the Son of his love, to do what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh? He has provided help for them that cannot help themselves: but thou, insensible of thine own weakness, wilt needs think to recover thyfelf by thine own works, while thou art no more able to do it, than to remove mountains of brais out of their place.

Wherefore I conclude, that thou art utterly unable o recover thyself in the way of works, or by the law.

thyself.

II. Let us try next, what the finner can do to recover himself, in the way of the gospel. It may be thou thinkest, that though thou canst not do all by thyself alone, yet Jesus Christ offering thee help, thou canst of thyself embrace it, and use it for thy recovery. But, O sinner, be convinced of thine absolute need of the grace of Christ: for truly, there is help offered, but thou canst not accept it: there is a rope cast out to draw thip-wrecked sinners to land: but alas! they have no hands to catch hold of it. They are like infants exposed in the open field, that must starve, though their food be lying by them, unless one put it in their mouths. To convince natural men of this, let it be considered,

First, That although Christ is offered in the gospel, yet they cannot believe in him. Saving faith is the faith of God's elect; the special gift of God to them, wrought in them by his Spirit. Salvation is offered to them that will believe in Christ, but how can you believe? John v. 44. It is offered to those that will come to Christ, but no man can come unto him, except the Father draw him. It is offered to them that will look to him, as lifted up on the pole of the gospel, Isa. xlv. 22. but the natural man is spiritually blind, Rev. iii. 17. and as to the things of the Spirit of God, he cannot know them, for they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Nay, whosoever will, he is welcome; let him come, Rev. xxii. 17. But there must be a day of power on the sinner, before he can be willing, Psal. cx. 3.

Secondly, Man naturally has nothing wherewith to improve, for his recovery, the help brought in by the gospel. He is cast away in a state of wrath; and is bound hand and foot, so that he cannot lay hold on the cords of love thrown out to him in the gospel. The most cunning artificer cannot work without instruments; neither can the most skilful musician play well on an instrument that is out of tune. How can one believe, how can he repent, whose understanding is darkness, Eph. v. 8. whose heart is a stopy heart, insteadible, insensible, insensible, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. whose affections are wholly disordered and distempered; who is averse to

good, and bent to evil? The arms of natural abilities are too short to reach supernatural help: hence those who most excel in them, are oft-times most estranged from spiritual things, Mat. xi. 25. Thou hast bid these

things from the wife and prudent.

Thirdly, Man cannot work a faving change on himfelf: but so changed he must be, else he can neither believe nor repent, nor ever fee heaven. No action can be without a fuitable principle. Believing, repenting, and the like, are the product of the new nature; and can never be produced by the old corrupt nature. Now, what can the natural man do in this matter? He must be regenerate; begotten again unto a lively hope: but as the child cannot be active in his own generation, fo a man cannot be active, but passive only, in his own regeneration. The heart is shut against Christ: man cannot open it, only God can do it by his grace, Acts xvi. 14. He is dead in fins: he must be quickened, raised out of his grave; who can do this but God himself? Eph. ii, 5, Nay, he must be created in Christ Jefus, unto good works, Eph. ii. 10. These are works of omnipotency, and can be done by no less power.

Fourthly, Man, in his depraved state, is under an utter inability to do any thing truly good, as was cleared before at large: how then can be obey the gospel? His nature is the very reverse of the gospel: how can he, of himself, fall in with the plan of salvation, and accept the offered remedy? The corruption of man's nature infallibly includes his utter inability to recover himself in any way: and whoso is convinced of the one, must needs admit the other; for they stand and fall together. Were all the purchase of Christ offered to the unregenerate man, for one good thought, he cannot command it, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourfelves. Were it offered on condition of a good word, yet how can ye, being evil, speak good things? Matt. xii. 35. . Nay, were it left to yourselves, to choose what is casiest, Christ himself tells you,

John xv. 5. Without me ye can do nothing.

Lastly, The natural man cannot but resist the Lord's offering to help him; yet that resistance is infallibly over-

come in the elect, by converting grace. Can the stony heart choose but resist the stroke? There is not only an inability, but an enmity and obstinacy in man's will by nature. God knows, O natural man (whether thou knowest it or not), that thou art obstinate, and thy neck an iron finew, and thy brow brafs, Ifa. xlviii. 4. and cannot be overcome, but by him who hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder. Hence, commonly speaking, there is such hard work in converting a finner. Sometimes he feems to be caught in the net of the gospel; yet quickly he slips away again. The hook catcheth hold of him; but he struggles, till getting free of it, he goes away with a bleeding wound. When good hopes are conceived of him, by those that travel in birth for the forming of Christ in him, there is oft-times nothing brought forth but wind. The deceitful heart makes many a shift to avoid the Saviour, and cheat the man of eternal happiness. Thus the natural man lies funk in a state of fin and wrath, utterly unable to recover himself.

Object. (1.) If we be under utter innability to do any good, how can God require us to do it? Anwf. God making man upright, Eccl. vii. 29. gave him a power to do every thing that he should require of him; this power man lost by his own fault. We were bound to ferve God, and do whatever he commanded us, as being his creatures; and also, we were under the superadded tie of a covenant, for that purpose. Now, we having, by our own fault, difabled ourselves, shall God lose his right of requiring our task, because we have thrown away the strength he gave us, whereby to perform it? Has the creditor no right to require payment of his money, because the debtor has squandered it away, and is not able to pay him? Truly, if God can require no more of us than we are able to do, we need no more to fave us from wrath, but to make ourselves unable for every duty, and to incapacitate ourselves for ferving God any manner of way, as profane men frequently do: and io the deeper a man is plunged in fin, he will be the more fecure from wrath; for where God can require no duty of us, we do not fin in omitting it;

and where there is no fin, there can be no wrath. (As to what may be urged by the unhumbled foul, against the putting our stock into Adam's hand, the righteousness of that dispensation was cleared before.) But, moreover, the unrenewed man is daily throwing away the very remains of natural abilities; that rational light and strength which are to be found amongst the ruins of mankind. Nay, further, he will not believe his own utter inability to help himself; so that out of his own mouth he must be condemned. Even those who make their natural impotency to good a covert to their floth, do, with others, delay the work of turning to God from time to time, and, under convictions, make large promifes of reformation, which afterwards they never regard, and delay their repentance to a death-bed, as if they could help themselves in a moment; which shews them to be far from a due sense of their natural inability, whatever they pretend.

Now if God can require of men the duty they are not able to do, he can in justice punish them for their not doing it, notwithstanding their inability. If he has power to exact the debt of obedience, he has also power to cast the insolvent debtor into prison for his not paying it. Further, though unregenerate men have no gracious abilities, yet they want not natural abilities, which, nevertheless, they will not improve. There are many things they can do, which they do not, they will not do them; and therefore their damnation will be just. Nay, all their inability to good is voluntary; they will not come to Christ, John v. 40. They will not repent, they will die, Ezek. xviii. 51. So they will be justly condemned; because they will neither turn to God, nor come to Christ; but love their chains better than their liberty, and darkness rather than light,

Object. (2.) Why do you then preach Christ to us; call us to come to him, to believe, repent, and use the means of salvation? Answ. Because it is your duty so to do. It is your duty to accept of Christ, as he is offered in the gospel; to repent of your sins, and to be holy in all manner of conversation: these things are

John iii. 19.

commanded you of God; and his command, not your ability, is the measure of your duty. Moreover, these calls and exhortations are the means that God is pleafed to make use of for converting his elect, and working grace in their hearts: to them, faith cometh by hearing, Rom. x. 17. while they are as unable to help themfelves as the rest of mankind are. Upon very good grounds may we, at the command of God, who raifeth the dead, go to their graves, and cry in his name, Awake, thou that fleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light, Eph. v. 14. And seeing the elect are not to be known and diffinguished from others before conversion; as the fun shines on the blind man's face, and the rain falls on the rocks, as well as on the fruitful plains; fo we preach Christ to all, and shoot the arrow at a venture, which God himself directs as he fees meet. Moreover, thefe calls and exhortations are not altogether in vain, even to those that are not converted by them. Such persons may be convinced, though they be not converted: although they be not fanctified by these means, yet they may be restrained by them, from running into that excess of wickedness which otherwise they would arrive at. The means of grace ferve, as it were, to embalm many dead fouls, which are never quickened by them: though they do not restore them to life, yet they keep them from fmelling fo rank as otherwife they would do. Finally, Though you cannot recover yourselves, nor take hold of the faving help offered to you in the gofpel, yet, even by the power of nature, you may use the outward and ordinary means, whereby Christ communicates the benefits of redemption to ruined sinners, who are utterly unable to recover themselves out of the state of sin and wrath. You may and can, if you please, do many things that would fet you in a fair way for help from the Lord Jesus Christ. You may go so far on, as to be not far from the kingdom of God, as the discreet scribe had done, Mark xii. 34. though (it should feem) he was destitute of supernatural abilities. Though you cannot cure yourselves, yet you may come to the pool, where many fuch difeafed persons, as you are, have been cured: though you have none to put you into it, yet you may lie at the fide of it: who knows but the Lord may return, and leave a bleffing behind hiln? as in the case of the impotent man, recorded John v. 5-8. I hope Satan does not chain you to your houses, nor stake you down in your fields on the Lord's day; but you are at li-berty, and can wait at the posts of wisdom's doors, if you will. When you come thither, he doth not beat drums at your ears, that you cannot hear what is faid: there is no force upon you, obliging you to apply all you hear to others; you may apply to yourselveswhat belongs to your state and condition. When you go home, you are not fettered in your houses, where perhaps no religious discourse is to be heard; but you may retire to some separate place, where you can meditate, and put pertinent questions to your consciences upon what you have heard. You are not possessed with a dumb devil, that you cannot get your mouths opened in prayer to God. You are not so driven out of your beds to your worldly bufiness, and from your worldly business to your beds again, but you might, if you would, make some prayer to God upon the case of your perishing souls. You may examine yourselves as to the state of your souls, in a solemn manner, as in the presence of God; you may discern that you have no grace, and that you are lost and undone without it; and you may cry unto God for it. These things are within the compass of natural abilities, and may be practised where there is no grace. It must aggravate your guilt, that you will not be at so much pains, about the state and case of your precious souls. If you do not what you can, you will be condemned, not only for your want of grace, but for your despising it.

Object. (3.) But all this is needless, seeing we are utterly unable to help ourselves out of the state of sin and wrath. Answ. Give not place to that delusion, which puts assumed what God hath joined; namely, the use of means, and a sense of our own impotency. If ever the Spirit of God graciously influence your souls, you will become thoroughly sensible of your absolute inabi-

lity, and yet enter upon a vigorous use of means. You will do for yourselves, as if you were to do all; and yet overlook all you do, as if you had done nothing. Will you do nothing for yourselves, because you cannot do all? Lay down no fuch impious conclusion against your own fouls. Do what you can; and, it may be, while you are doing what you can for yourselves, God will do for you what you cannot. Understandest thou what thou readest? said Philip to the Eunuch: How can I, faith he, except some man should guide me? Acts viii. 30, 31. He could not understand the Scripture he read; yet he could read it: he did what he could, he read; and while he was reading, God fent him an interpreter. The Israelites were in a great strait at the Red Sea: and how could they help themselves, when on the one hand were mountains, and on the other the enemy's garrifon; when Pharaoh and his hoft were behind them, and the Red Sea before them? What could they do? Speak unto the children of Israel, faith the Lord to Moses, that they go forward, Exod. xiv. 15. For what end should they go forward? Can they make a passage to themselves through the sea? No; but let them go forward, faith the Lord; though they cannot turn sea to dry land, yet they can go forward to the fhore: fo they did; and when they did what they could, God did for them what they could not do.

Quest. Has God promised to convert and save them who, in the use of means, do what they can towards their own relief? Answ. We may not speak wickedly for God: natural men being strangers to the covenant of promise, Eph. ii. 12. have no such promise made to them. Nevertheless they do not act rationally, unless they exert the powers they have, and do what they can. For, (1.) It is possible this course may succeed with them. If you do what you can, it may be, God will do for you what you cannot do for yourselves. This is fufficient to determine a man, in a matter of the utmost importance, fuch as this is, Acts viii. 22. Pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee. Joel ii. 14. Who knoweth if he will return? If fuccess may be, the trial should be. If, in a wreck at sea, all the failors

and passengers betake themselves each to a broken board for fafety; and one of them should see all the rest perish, notwithstanding their utmost endeavour to fave themselves: yet the very possibility of escaping by that means, would determine that one still to do his best with his board. Why then do not you reason with yourselves, as the four lepers did, who sat at the gate of Samaria, 2 Kings vii. 3, 4: Why do you not lay, If we fit fill, not doing what we can, we die; let us put it to a trial; if we be faved, we shall live; if not, we shall but die? (2.) It is propable this course may fucceed. God is good and merciful: he loves to furprise men with his grace, and is often found of them that fought him not, Ifa. lxv. 1. If you do this, you are fo far in the road of your duty; and you are using the means, which the Lord is wont to bless, for men's spiritual recovery: you lay yourselves in the way of the great Physician; and so it is propable you may be healed. Lydia went, with others, to the place where prayer was wont to be made; and the Lord opened her heart, Acts xvi. 13, 14. You plough and fow, though no body can tell you for certain that you will get fo much as your feed again: you use means for the recovery of your health, though you are not fure they will flicceed. In these cases probability determines you; and why not in this also? Importunity, we see, does very much with men: therefore pray, meditate, desire help of God; be much at the throne of grace, supplicating for grace; and do not faint. Though God regard you not, who in your present state are but one mass of sin, universally deprayed, and vitiated in all the powers of your foul; yet he may regard prayer, mediation, and the like means of his own appointment, and he may bless them to you. Wherefore, if you will not do what you can; you are not only dead, but you declare yourselves unworthy of eternal life.

To conclude, let the faints admire the freedom and power of grace, which came to them in their helpless condition, made their chains fall off, the iron gate to open to them, raised the fallen creatures; and brought them out of the state of fin and wrath, wherein they

would have lain and perished, had not they been mercifully visited. Let the natural man be sensible of his utter inability to recover himself. Know, thou art without strength; and canst not come to Christ, till thou be drawn. Thou art loft, and canst not help thyself. This may shake the foundation of thy hopes, who never faw thy absolute need of Christ and his grace; but thinkest to shift for thyself by thy civility, morality, drowsy wishes and duties; and by a faith and repentance which have fprung out of thy natural powers, without the power and efficacy of the grace of Christ. O be convinced of thy absolute need of Christ, and his overcoming grace: believe thy utter inability to recover thyfelf: that so thou mayst be humbled, shaken out of thy felf-confidence, and lie down in dust and ashes, groaning out thy miferable case before the Lord. A proper sense of thy natural impotency, the impotency of depraved human nature, would be a step towards a de-

Thus far of man's natural state, the state of entire

depravation.

S T A T E III.

NAMELY,

The STATE of GRACE; or BEGUN RECOVERY.

H E A D I. REGENERATION.

PETER i. 23. Being born again, not of corruptible feed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

[7E proceed now to the state of grace, the state of begun recovery of human nature, into which all that shall partake of eternal happiness are translated, fooner or later, while in this world. It is the refult of a gracious change, made upon those who shall inherit eternal life; which change may be taken up in these two particulars: (1.) In opposition to their natural real state, the state of corruption, there is a change made upon them in regeneration; whereby their nature is changed. (2.) In opposition to their natural relative state, the state of wrath, there is a change made upon them, in their union with the Lord Jefus Christ; by which they are placed beyond the reach of condemnation. These, therefore; namely, regeneration and union with Christ, I design to handle, as the great and comprehensive changes on a sinner, bringing him into the state of grace.

The first of these we have in the text; together with the outward and ordinary means by which it is brought about. The apostle here, to excite the saints to the study of holiness, and particularly of brotherly love, puts them in mind of their spiritual origin. He tells them that they were born again; and that of incorruptible

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feed, the word of God. This shews them to be brethren, partakers of the fame new nature; which is the root from which holiness, and particularly brotherlylove, spring. We are once born sinners; we must be born again, that we may be faints. The simple word fignifies to be begotten; and fo it may be read, Mat. xi. 11. to be conceived, Mat. i. 20. and to be born, Mat. ii. I. Accordingly, the compound word, used in the text, may be taken in its full latitude, the last idea presupposing the two former: so regeneration is a supernatural real change on the whole man, fitly compared to natural or corporal generation, as will afterward appear. The ordinary means of regeneration, called the feed, whereof the new creature is formed, is not corruptible feed. Of fuch, indeed, our bodies are generated: but the spiritual feed, of which the new creature is generated, is incorruptible; namely, the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. The found of the word of God, passeth, even as other sounds do: but the word lasteth, liveth, and abideth, in respect of its everlasting effects on all upon whom it operates. This word, which by the zospel is preached unto you, (ver. 25.) impregnated by the Spirit of God, is the means of regeneration: and by it are dead sinners raised to life.

DOCTRINE. All men, in the state of grace, are born again. All gracious persons, namely, such as are in a state of savour with God, and endowed with gracious qualities and dispositions, are regenerate persons. In discoursing on this subject, I shall shew what regeneration is; next, why it is so called; and then apply the

doctrine.

Of the Nature of Regeneration.

II. For the better understanding of the nature of regeneration, take this along with you in the first place, that as there are false conceptions in nature, so there are also in grace: by these many are deluded, mistaking some partial changes made upon them, for this great and thorough change. To remove such mistakes, let these sew things be considered; (1.) Many call the church their mother, whom God will not own to be

his children, Cant. i. 6. My mother's children (i. e. false brethren) were angry with me. All that are baptized are not born again. Simon was baptized, yet still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 13. 23. Where Christianity is the religion of the country, many are called by the name of Christ, who have no more of him than the name: and no wonder, for the devil had his goats among Christ's sheep, in those places where but sew professed the Christian religion, I John ii. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us. (2.) Good education is not regeneration. Education may chain up men's lusts, but cannot change their hearts. A wolf is still a ravenous beast, though it be in chains. Joafh was very devout during the life of his good tutor Jehoiada; but afterwards he quickly shewed what spirit he was of, by his sudden apostaly, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2. 17, 18. Good example is of mighty influence to change the outward man: but that change often goes off, when a man changes his company; of which the world affords many fad instances. (3.) A turning from open profanity, to civility and fobriety, falls short of this saving change. Some are for a while very loose, especially in their younger years: but at length they reform, and leave their profane courses. Here is a change, yet only such as may be sound in men utterly void of the grace of God, and whose righteousness is so far from exceeding, that it doth not come up to the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (4.) One may engage in all the outward duties of religion, and yet not be born again. Though lead be cast into various shapes, it remains still but a base metal. Men may escape the pollutions of the world, and yet be but dogs and fwine, 2 Pet. ii. 20. 22. All the external acts of religion are within the compass of natural abilities. Yea, hypocrites may have the counterfeit of all the graces of the Spirit: for we read of true boliness, Eph. iv. 23. and faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5. which thews us that there is a counterfeit holinels, and a feigned faith. (5.) Men may advance to a great deal of strictness in their own way of religion, and yet be ftrangers to the new-birth, Acts xxvi. 5. After the ftrict-

est seet of our religion I lived a Pharisee. Nature has its own unfanctified ftrictness in religion. The Pharisees had fo much of it, that they looked on Christ as little better than a mere Libertine. A man whose conscience hath been awakened, and who lives under the felt influence of the covenant of works, what will he not do that is within the compass of natural abilities! It is a truth, though it came out of a hellish mouth, that skin for skin, all that a man bath will be give for his life, Job ii. 4. (6.) A person may have sharp soul exercises and pangs, and yet die in the birth. Many have been in pain, that have but, as it were, brought forth wind. There may be fore pangs and throws of conscience, which turn to nothing at last. Pharaoh and Simon Magus had fuch convictions, as made them defire the prayers of others for them. Judas repented himself, and, under terrors of conscience, gave back his illgotten pieces of filver. All is not gold that glitters. Trees may bloffom fairly in the fpring, on which no fruit is to be found in the harvest: and some have sharp soulexercises, which are nothing but foretastes of hell.

The new-birth, however in appearance hopefully begun, may be marred two ways. First, Some, like Zarah, Gen. xxxviii. 28, 29. are brought to the birth, but go back again. They have sharp convictions for a while; but these go off, and they turn as careless about their falvation, and as profane as ever; and usually worse than ever; their last state is worse than their first, Mat. xii. 45. They get awakening grace, but not converting grace; and that goes off by degrees, as the light of the declining day, till it issue in midnight darkness. Secondly, Some, like Ishmael, come forth too foon; they are born before the time of the promise, Gen. xvi. 2. compare Gal. iv. 22. They take up with a mere law-work, and stay not till the time of the promise of the gospel. They snatch at consolation, not waiting till it be given them; and foolishly draw their comfort from the law that wounded them. They apply the healing plaster to themselves, before their wound be sufficiently searched. The law, that rigorous hufband, severely beats them, and throws in curses and

vengeance upon their fouls; then they fall to reforming, praying, mourning, promising, and vowing, till this ghost be laid: which done, they fall asleep again in the arms of the law: but they are never shaken out of themselves and their own righteousness, nor brought

forward to Jesus Christ.

Lastly, There may be a wonderful moving of the affections, in fouls that are not at all touched with regenerating grace. Where there is no grace, there may, notwithstanding, be a flood of tears, as in Esau, who found no place of repentance, though he fought it carefully with tears, Heb. xii. 17. There may be great flashes of joy; as in the hearers of the word reprefented in the parable of the stony ground, who anon with joy receive it, Matt. xiii 20. There may also be great defires after good things, and great delight in them too; as in these hypocrites described, Isa. lviii. 2. They feek me daily, and delight to know my ways.—They take delight in approaching to God. See how high they may sometimes stand, who yet fall away, Heb. vi. 4. 5, 6. They may be enlightened, taste of the beavenly gift, be partakers of the Holy Ghost, taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. Common operations of the divine Spirit, like a land flood, make a strange turning of things upfide down: but when they are over, all runs again in the ordinary channel. All these things may be, where the fanctifying Spirit of Christ. never rests upon the soul, but the stony heart still remains; and in that case these affections cannot but wither, because they have no root.

But regeneration is a real thorough change, whereby the man is made a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. The Lord God makes the creature a new creature, as the gold-finith melts down the vessel of dishonour, and makes it a vessel of honour. Man is, in respect of his spiritual state, altogether disjointed by the fall; every faculty of the soul is, as it were, dislocated. In regeneration the Lord looseth every joint, and sets it right again. Now this change made in regeneration is,

1. A change of qualities or dispositions: it is not a change of the substance, but of the qualities of the

foul. Vitious qualities are removed, and the contrary dispositions are brought in their room. The old man is put off, Eph. ix. 22. the new man put on, verse 24. Man lost none of the rational faculties of his foul by sin: he had an understanding still, but it was darkened; he had still a will, but it was contrary to the will of God. So in regeneration, there is not a new substance created, but new qualities are insused; light instead of darkness, righteousness instead of unrighteousness.

2. It is a supernatural change; he that is born again, is born of the Spirit, John iii. 5. Great changes may be made, by the power of nature, especially when affished by external revelation. Nature may be so elevated by the common influences of the Spirit, that a person may thereby be turned into another man, (as Saul was, I Sam. x. 6.) who yet never becomes a new man. But in regeneration, nature itself is changed, and we become partakers of the divine nature; and this must needs be a supernatural change. How can we, that are dead in trespasses and fins, renew ourselves, any more than a dead man can raife himself out of his grave? Who but the fanctifying Spirit of Christ can form Christ in a soul, changing it into the same image? Who but the Spirit of fanctification can give the new heart? Well may we fay, when we fee a man thus changed, This is the finger of God.

3. It is a change into the likeness of God, 2 Cor. iii. 18. We—beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image. Every thing that generates, generates its like: the child bears the image of the parent; and they that are born of God, bear God's image. Man aspiring to be as God, made himself like the devil. In his natural state he resembles the devil, as a child doth his sather, John viii. 44. Ye are of your father the devil. But when this happy change comes, the image of Satan is defaced, and the image of God is restored. Christ himself, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, is the pattern after which the new creature is made, Rom. viii. 29. For whom he did forcknow, he also did predessinate to be conformed to the

image of his Son. Hence he is faid to be formed in the

regenerate, Gal. iv. 19.

4. It is an universal change; all things become new, 2 Cor. v. 17. It is a bleffed leaven, that leavens the whole lump, the whole spirit, and soul, and body. Original fin infects the whole man; and regenerating grace, which is the falve, goes as far as the fore. This fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness; goodness of the mind, goodness of the will, goodness of the affections, goodness of the whole man. He gets not only a new head, to know religion, or a new tongue, to talk of it; but a new heart, to love and embrace it in the whole of his conversation. When the Lord opens the sluice of grace, on the foul's new-birth-day, the waters run through the whole man, to purify and make him fruitful. In those natural changes, spoken of before, there are, as it were, pieces of new cloth put into an old garment; as new life fewed to an old heart: but the gracious change is a thorough change; a change both of heart and life.

Yet though every part of the man is renewed, there is no part of him perfectly renewed. As an infant has all the parts of a man, but none of them come to a perfect growth; fo regeneration brings a perfection of parts, to be brought forward in the gradual advances of fanctification, I Pet. ii. 2. As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. Although in regeneration there is heavenly light let into the mind; yet there is still some darkness there: though the will is renewed, it is not perfectly renewed; there is still fome of the old inclination to fin remaining: and thus it will be, till that which is in part be done away, and the light of glory come. Adam was created at his full stature; but they that are born, must have their time to grow up: fo those that are born again, come forth into the new world of grace, as new born babes: Adam being created upright, was at the same time perfectly righteous, without the least mixture of sinful impersection.

Lastly, Nevertheless, it is a lastling change, which never goes off. The seed is incorruptible, saith the text; and so is the creature that is formed of it. The life

given in regeneration, whatever decays it may fall under, can never be utterly lost. His feed remaineth in him, who is born of God, I John iii. 9. Though the branches should be cut down, the root shall abide in the earth; and being watered with the dew of heaven, shall sprout again: for the root of the righteous shall not be moved, Prov. xii. 3.

But to come to particulars:

First, In regeneration the mind is favingly enlightened. There is a light let into the understanding; so that they who were sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord, Eph. v. 8. The beams of the light of life make their way into the dark dungeon of the heart: then the night is over, and the morning light is come, which will shine more and more unto the perfect day. The man is illuminated,

1. In the knowledge of God. He has far other thoughts of God than ever he had before, Hof. ii. 20. I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord brings him back to this question, What is God? and catechiseth him anew upon that grand point, so that he is made to say, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye feeth thee, Job xiii. 5. The spotless purity of God, his exact justice, his all-sufficiency, and other glorious perfections, revealed in his word, are by this new light discovered to the foul, with a plainness and certainty, that doth as far exceed the knowledge which it had of these things before, as ocular demonstration exceeds common report. For now he sees what he only heard of before.

2. He is enlightened in the knowledge of fin. He hath different thoughts of it than he was wont to have. Formerly his fight could not pierce through the cover Satan laid over it: but now the Spirit of God removes it, and wipes off the paint and varnish; so that he sees it in its natural colours, as the worst of evils, exceeding sinful, Rom. vii. 13. O what deformed monsters do formerly beloved lusts appear! Were they right eyes, see would pluck them out. Were they right hands, he would consent to their cutting off. He sees

how offensive sin is to God, how destructive it is to the foul; and calls himself a fool, for fighting so long against the Lord, and harbouring that destroyer as a bosom friend.

3. He is inftructed in the knowledge of himself. Regenerating grace bringeth the prodigal to himself, Luke xv. 17. and makes men full of eyes within, knowing every one the plague of his own heart. The mind being savingly enlightened, the man sees how desperately corrupt his nature is; what enmity against God, and his holy law, has long lodged there: so that his soul loaths itself. No open sepulchre, no puddle so vile and loathsome, in his eyes, as himself, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Then shall ye remember your evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight. He is no worse than he was before: but the sun is shining; and so those pollutions are seen, which he could not discern, when there was no dawning in him: as the word is, Isa. viii. 20. while as yet there was no breaking of the day of grace with him.

4. He is enlightened in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, i Cor. i. 23. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the fews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God The truth is, unregenerate men, though capable of preaching Chrift, have not (properly speaking) the knowledge of him, but only an opinion, a good opinion of him, as a man has of many controverted points of doctrine, wherein he is far from certainty. As when you meet with a stranger on the road, who behaves himself difcreetly, you conceive a good opinion of him; and therefore willingly converse with him: but yet you will not commit your money to him; because, though you have a good opinion of the man, he is a stranger to you, you do not know him; so may they think well of Christ; but they will never commit themselves to him, seeing they know him not. But faving illumination carries the foul beyond opinion, to the certain knowledge of Christ and his excellency, 1 Thest. i. 5. For our gospel came not unto you in roord only, but also in power, and in

the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. The light of grace thus discovers the suitableness of the mystery of Christ to the divine perfections, and to the sinner's case. Hence the regenerate admire the glorious plan of falvation, through Christ crucified, lay their whole weight upon it, and heartily acquiefce therein; for whatever he be to others he is to them, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. But unrenewed men, not feeing this, are offended in him; they will not venture their fouls in that bottom, but betake themselves to the broken boards of their own righteousness. The fame light convincingly discovers a superlative worth, a transcendant glory and excellency in Christ, which darken all created excellency; as the rifing fun makes the stars hide their heads: it engages the merchantman to fell all that he hath, to buy the one pearl of great price, Matt. xiii. 45, 46. makes the foul heartily content to take Christ for all, and instead of all. An unskilful merchant, to whom one offereth a pearl of great price, for all his petty ware, dares not venture on the bargain; for though he thinks that one pearl may be worth more than all he has, yet he is not fure of it: but when a jeweller comes to him, and affures him it is worth double all his wares; he then greedily embraces the bargain, and cheerfully parts with all he has for that pearl. Finelly, This illumination, in the knowledge of Christ, convincingly discover to men a fulness inhim, fufficient for the fupply of all their wants, enough to fatisfy the boundless defires of an immortal soul. And they are perfuaded that fuch fulness is in him, in order to be communicated. They depend upon it, as a certain truth; and therefore their fouls take up their eternal rest in him.

5. The man is instructed in the knowledge of the vanity of the world, Psal. cxix. 96. I have seen an end of all persection. Regenerating grace elevates the soul, translates it into the spiritual world, from whence this earth cannot but appear a little, yea, a very little thing; even as heaven appeared before, while the soul was grovelling in the earth, Grace brings a man into a new world; where this world is reputed but a stage of

ranity, an howling wilderness, a valley of tears. God hath hung the sign of vanity at the door of all created enjoyments: yet how do men throng into the house, calling and looking for somewhat that is satisfying; even after it has been a thousand times told them, that there is no such thing in it, it is not to be got there! Isa. lvii. 10. Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy ways; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope. The truth of the matter lies here, they do not see by the light of grace, they do not spiritually discern that sight of vanity. They have often indeed made a rational discovery of it: but can that truly wean the heart from the world? Nay, no more than painted fire can burn off the prisoner's bands. But the light of grace is the light of life, powerful and efficacious.

Lastly, (To fum up all in one word) in regeneration the mind is enlightened in the knowledge of spiritual things, 1 John ii. 20. Ye have an unction from the holy One, (that is from Jesus Christ, Rev. iii. 18. It is an allusion to the sanctuary, whence the holy oil was brought to anoint the priefts) and ye know all things, viz. necessary to falvation. Though men be not booklearned, if they are born again, they are Spirit-learned; for all fuch are taught of God, John vi. 45. The Spirit of regeneration teacheth them what they knew not before; and what they knew by the ear only, he teacheth them over again as by the eye. The light of grace is an overcoming light, determining men to affent to divine truths, on the mere testimony of God. It is no eafy thing for the mind of man to acquiesce in divine revelation. Many pretend great respect to the Scriptures, whom, nevertheless, the clear Scripture-testimony will not divorce from their pre-conceived opinions. But this illumination will make men's minds run, as willing captives, after Christ's chariot-wheels, which they are ready to allow to drive over, and cast down their imaginations, and every thing high that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, 2 Cor. x. 5. It will bring them to receive the kingdom of God as a little child, Mark x. 15. who thinks he has fufficient ground to believe any thing, if his father do but fay it is fo.

Secondly, The will is renewed. The Lord takes away the stony heart, and gives a heart of sleth, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. and fo of stones raiseth up children to Abraham. Regenerating grace is powerful and efficacious, and gives the will a new turn. It does not indeed force it; but sweetly, yet powerfully draws it, so that his people are willing in the day of his power, Pfal. cx. 3. There is heavenly oratory in the Mediator's lips, to perfuade finners, Pf. xlv. 2. Grace is poured into thy lips. There are cords of a man; and bands of love in his hands. to draw them after him, Hof. xi. 4. Love makes a net for elect fouls, which will infallibly catch them, and bring them to land. The cords of Christ's love are ftrong cords: and they need to be fo, for every finner is heavier than a mountain of brais: and Satan, together with the heart itself, draws the contrary way. But love is ftrong as death: and the Lord's love to the foul lie died for, is the strongest love; which acts so powerfully, that it must come off victorious.

1. The will is cured of its utter inability to will what is good. While the opening of the prison, to them that are bound, is proclaimed in the gespel, the Spirit of God comes and opens the prison door, goes to the prisoner, and by the power of his grace makes his chains fall off; breaks the bonds of iniquity, wherewith he was held in sin, so as he could neither will nor do any thing truly good; brings him forth into a large place, working in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil. ii. 13. Then it is that the soul, that was fixed to the earth, can move heavenward; the withered hand is restored, and can be

stretched out.

2. There is wrought in the will a fixed aversion to evil. In regeneration, a man gets a new spirit put within him, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. and that spirit lusteth against the stesh, Gal. v. 17. The sweet morsel of sin, so greedily swallowed down, he now loaths, and would sain be rid of it; even as willingly as one that had drunk a cup of poison would throw it up again. When the spring is stopped, the mud lies in the well unmoved: but when once the spring is cleared, the

waters springing up will work away the mud by degrees. Even fo, while a man continues in an unregenerate state, fin lies at ease in the heart: but as soon as the Lord strikes the rocky heart with the rod of his strength, in the day of conversion, grace is in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life, John iv. 14. working away natural corruption, and gradually purifying the heart, Acts xv. 9. The renewed will riseth up against sin, strikes at the root thereof, and the branches too. Lusts are now grievous, and the foul endeavours to starve them; the corrupt nature is the fource of all evil; and therefore the foul will be often laying it before the great Phyfician. O what forrow, shame, and felf-loathing fills the heart, in the day that grace makes its triumphant entrance into it! For now the mad-man is come to himself, and the remembrance of his follies cannot but cut him to the heart.

- Lastly, The will is renewed with an inclination, bent, and propenfity to good. In its depraved state, it lay quite another way, being prone and bent to evil only; But now, by the drawing of the omnipotent, all-conquering arm, it is drawn from evil to good; and gets another turn. As the former was natural, fo this is natural too, in respect of the new nature given in regeneration, which has its own holy luftings, as well as the corrupt nature hath its finful lustings, Gal. v. 17. The will, as renewed, inclines and points towards God and godlinefs. When God made man, his will, in respect of its intention, was directed towards God, as his chief end; in respect of its choice, it pointed towards that which God willed. When man unmade himself, his will was framed to the very reverse hereof: he made himself his chief end, and his own will his law. But when man is new made, in regeneration, grace rectifies this disorder in some measure, though not perfectly; because we are but renewed in part, while in this world. It brings back the finner, out of himfelf, to God as his chief end, Pfal. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I defire besides thee. Phil. i. 21. For to me to live is Christ. It makes

him to deny himself, and whatever way he turns, to point habitually towards God, who is the centre of the gracious soul, his home, his dwelling place in all generations, Pfal. xc. 1. By regenerating grace, the will is brought into conformity to the will of God. It is conformed to his preceptive will, being indowed with holy inclinations, agreeably to every one of his commands. The whole law is impressed on the gracious soul: every part of it is written on the renewed heart. Although remaining corruption makes fuch blots in the writing, that oft-times the man himself cannot read it, yet he that wrote it can read it at all times; it is never quite blotted out, neither can it be. What he has written, he has written, and it shall stand; For this is the covenant-I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, Heb. viii. 10. It is a covenant of falt, a perpetual covenant. It is also conformed to his providential will; fo that the man would no more be mafter of his own process, nor carve out his lot for himfelf. He learns to fay, from his heart; The will of the Lord be done; he shall choose our inheritance for us, Psal. xlvii. 4. Thus the will is disposed to fall in with those things, which in its depraved state it could never be reconciled to.

Particularly, (1.) The foul is reconciled to the covenant of peace. The Lord God proposeth a covenant of peace to finners; a covenant which he himself hath framed, and registered in the Bible: but they are not pleased with it. Nay, an unregenerate heart cannot be pleased with it. Were it put into their hands, to frame it according to their mind, they would blot many things out of it, which God has put in, and put in many things which God has kept out. But the renewed heart is intirely fatisfied with the covenant, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and fure; this is all my falvation, and all my defire. Though the covenant could not be brought down to their depraved will, their will is by grace brought up to the covenant: they are well pleafed with it: there is nothing in it which they would have out; nor is any thing left out of it, which they would have

in. (2.) The will is disposed to receive Christ Jesus the Lord. The soul is content to submit to him. Regenerating grace undermines, and brings down the towering imaginations of the heart, raised up against its rightful Lord: it breaks the iron sinew, which kept the sinner from bowing to him; and disposes him to be no more stiff necked, but to yield. He is willing to have on the yoke of Christ's commands, to take up the cross, and to sollow him. He is content to take Christ, on any terms, Pial. cx. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of

thy pozver.

The mind being favingly enlightened, and the will renewed, the finner is thereby determined and enabled to answer the gospel-call. So the main work in regeneration is done; the fort of the heart is taken; there is room made for the Lord Jesus Christ, in the inmost parts of the foul; the inner-door of the will being now opened to him, as well as the outer-door of the understanding. In one word, Christ is passively, received into the heart; he is come into the foul, by his quickening Spirit, whereby spiritual life is given to the man; who in himself was dead in sin. His first vital act we may conceive to be an active receiving of Jefus Christ, discerned in his glorious excellencies; that is, a believing on him, a closing with him, as discerned, offered, and exhibited in the word of his grace, the glorious golpel: the immediate effect of which is union with him, John i. 12, 13. To as many as received him, to them gave he power (or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Eph. iii. 17. That Christ may dwell in your bearts by faith. Christ having taken the heart by itorm, and triumphantly entered into it, in regeneration, the foul by faith, yields itself to him, as it is expressed, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Thus, this glorious King, who ame into the heart, by his Spirit, dwells in it by aith. The foul being drawn, runs; and being effecually called, comes.

Thirdly, In regeneration there is a happy change made on the affections; they are both rectified and regulated.

1. The change rectifies the affections, placing them on suitable objects, 2 Thest. iii. 5. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God. The regenerate man's defires are rectified; they are fet on God himfelf, and the things above. He, who before cried with the world, Who will shew us any good? has changed his note, and fays, Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, Pf. iv. 6. Before, he faw no beauty in Christ, for which he was to be defired; but now he is all defires, he is altogether lovely, Cant. v. 16. The main stream of his defires is turned to run towards God; for there is the one thing he defireth, Pfal. xxvii. 4. He defires to be holy, as well as to be happy; and rather to be gracious than great. His hopes, which before were low, and staked down to things on earth, are now raised, and fet on the glory which is to be revealed. He entertains the hope of eternal life, founded on the word of promise, Tit. i. 2. Which hope he has, as an anchor of the foul, fixing the heart under trials, Heb. vi. 16. It puts him upon purifying himself, even as God is pure, John iii. 3. For he is begotten again unto a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. His love is raised, and set on God himself, Psal. xviii. 1. on his holy law, Psal. cxix. 97. Though it strike against his most beloved luft, he says, The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good, Rom. vii. ver. 12. He loves the ordinances of God, Pfal. lxxxiv. 1. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! Being passed from death unto life, he loves the brethren, (1 John iii. 14.) the people of God, as they are called, I Pet. iii 10. He loves God for himself; and what is God's, for his sake. Yea, as being a child of God, he loves his own enemies. His heavenly Father is compassionate and benevolent: He maketh his fun to rife on the evil, and on the good; and fendeth rain on the just; and on the unjust; therefore he is in like manner disposed, Mat. v. 44, 45. His hatred is turned against sin, in himself and others, Psal. ci. 3. I hate the work of them that turn aside, it Shall not cleave to me. He groans under the body of it, and longs for deliverance, Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! His

joys and delights are in God the Lord, in the light of his countenance, in the law, and in his people, because they are like him. Sin is what he chiefly fears: it is a fountain of forrow to him now, though formerly a

spring of pleasure.

2. It regulates the affections placed on fuitable objects. Our affections, when placed on the creature, are naturally exorbitant. When we joy in it, we are apt to overjoy; and when we forrow, we are ready to forrow overmuch: but grace bridles these affections, clips their wings, and keeps them within bounds, that they overflow not their banks. It makes a man bate bis father, and mother, and wife, and children; yea, and bis own life also, comparatively; that is, to love them less than he loves God, Luke xiv. 26. It also rectifies lawful affections; bringing them forth from right principles, and directing them to right ends. There may be unholy defires after Christ and his grace; as when men desire Christ, not from any love to him, but merely out of love to themselves. Give us of your oil, said the foolish virgins, for our lamps are gone out, Mat. xxv. 8. There may be an unsanctified forrow for sin; as when one forroweth for it, not because it is displeasing to God, but only because of the wrath annexed to it; as did Pharaoh, Judas, and others. So a man may love his father and mother, from mere natural principles, without any respect to the command of God, binding him thereto. But grace fanctifies the affections, in fuch cases, making them to run in a new channel of love to God, respect to his commands, and regard to his glory. Again, grace raises the affections, where they are too low. It gives the chief feat in them to God, and pulls down all other rivals, whether persons or things, making them lie at his feet, Pfal, Ixxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I defire besides thee. He is loved for himself, and other persons or things for his sake. What is lovely in them, to the renewed heart, is some ray of the divine goodnels appearing in them: for unto gracious fouls they thine only by borrowed light. This accounts for the faints loving all men; and yet hating those that hate

God, and contemning the wicked, as vile persons. They hate and contemn them for their wickedness; there is nothing of God in that, and therefore nothing lovely nor honourable in it: but they love them for their commendable qualities or persections, whether natural or moral; because, in whoever these are, they are from God, and can be traced to him as their sountain. Finally, Regenerating grace sets the affections so firmly on God, that the man is disposed, at God's command, to quit his hold of every thing else, in order to keep his hold of Christ; to hate father and mother, in comparison with Christ, Luke xiv. 26. It makes even lawful enjoyments, like Joseph's mantle, to hang loose about a man, that he may quit them, when he is in hazard to be ensured by holding them.

If the stream of our affections were never thus turned, we are, doubtless, going down the stream into the pit. If the lust of the eye, the lust of the sleth, and the pride of life, have the throne in your hearts, which should be possessed by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; if we never had so much love to God as to ourselves; if sin has been somewhat bitter to us, but never so bitter as suffering, never so bitter as the pain of being weaned from it; truly we are strangers to this saving change. For grace turns the affections upside down, whenever

it comes into the heart.

Fourthly, The conscience is renewed. As a new light is set up in the soul, in regeneration, conscience is enlightened, instructed, and informed. That candle of the Lord, (Prov. xx. 27.) is now snuffed and brightened; so as it shines, and sends forth its light into the most retired corners of the heart; discovering sins which the soul was not aware of before: and in a special manner discovering the corruption and deprayity of nature, that seed and spawn whence all actual sins proceed. This produces the new complaint, Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! Conscience, which lay sleeping in the man's bosom before, is now awakened, and makes its voice to be heard through the whole soul: therefore there is no more rest for him in the sluggard's bed; he

must get up and be doing, arise, haste, and escape for his life. It powerfully incites to obedience, even in the most spiritual acts, which lay not within the view of the natural conscience; and powerfully restrains from sin, even from those sins which do not lie open to the observation of the world. It urgeth the sovereign authority of God, to which the heart is now reconciled, and which it willingly acknowledges: and so it engag. eth the man in duty, whatever be the hazard from the world; for it fills the heart fo with the fear of God, that the force of the fear of man is broken. This hath engaged many to put their life in their hand, and follow the cause of religion, which they once contemned, and resolutely walk in the path they formerly abhorred, Gal. i. 23. He which perfecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. Guilt now makes the conscience smart. It hath bitter remorfe for sins past, which fills the foul with anxiety, forrow, and felf-loathing. And every new reflection on these sins is apt to affect, and make its wounds bleed afresh with regret. It is made tender, in point of fin and duty, for the time to come: being once burnt, it dreads the fire, and fears to break the hedge where it was formerly bit by the ferpent. Finally, the renewed conscience drives the finner to Jesus Christ, as the only Physician that can draw out the sting of guilt; and whose blood alone can purge the conscience from dead works, Heb. ix. 14. refusing all ease offered to it from any other hand. This is an evidence that the conscience is not only fired, as it may be in an unregenerate state, but oiled also with regenerating grace.

Fifthly, As the memory wanted not its share of depravity, it is also bettered by regenerating grace. The inemory is weakened, with respect to those things that are not worth their room therein; and men are taught to forget injuries, and drop their resentments, Matt. v. 44, 45. Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you—That ye may be (i. e. appear to be) the children of your Father which is in heaven. It is strengthened for spiritual things. We have Solomon's receipt for an ill memory, Prov. iii. 1. My son, saith he,

forget not my law. But how shall it be kept in mind? Let thine heart keep my commandments. Grace makes a heart-memory, even, where there is no good head-memory, Pfal. cxix. 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart. The heart, truly touched with the powerful sweetness of truth, will help the memory to retain what is so relished. If divine truths made deeper impressions on our hearts, they would impress themselves with more force on our memories, Pfal. cxix. 93. I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me. Grace sanctifies the memory. Many have large but unfanctified memories, which ferve only to gather knowledge, whereby to aggravate their condemnation: but the renewed memory ferves to remember his commandments, to do them, Psas. ciii. 18. It is a sacred store-house, from whence a Christian is furnished in his way to Zion; for faith and hope are often supplied out of it, in a dark hour. It is the store-house of former experiences, and these are the believer's way-marks, by noticing of which he comes to know where he is, even in a dark time, Pfal. xlvii. 6. O my God, my foul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Fordan, &c. It also helps the soul to godly forrow and felf-loathing, prefenting old guilt anew before the conscience, and making it bleed afresh, though the sin be already pardoned, Psal. xxv. 7. Remember not the fins of my youth. Where unpardoned guilt is lying on the fleeping conscience, it is often employed to bring in a word, which, in a moment, fets the whole foul on the stir: as, when Peter remembered the words of Jelus-he went out and wept bitterly, Matt. xxvi. 75. The word of God, laid up in a fanctified memory, ferves a man to refift temptations, puts the fword in his hand against his spiritual enemies, and is a light to direct his steps in the way of religion and righteousness.

Sixthly, There is a change made on the body, and the members thereof, in respect of their use: they are consecrated to the Lord. Even the body is for the Lord, I Cor. vi. 13. It is the temple of the Holy Ghost, ver. 19. The members thereof, that were formerly instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, become

instruments of righteousness unto God, Rom. vi. 13. fervants to righteousness unto holiness, ver. 19. The eye, that conveyed sinful imaginations into the heart, is under a covenant, Job xxxi. 1. to do so no more; but to serve the soul, in viewing the works, and reading the word, of God. The ear, that had often been death's porter, to let in sin, is turned to be the gate of life, by which the word of life enters the soul. The tongue, that set on fire the whole course of nature, is restored to the office it was designed for by the Creator; namely, to be an instrument of glorifying him, and setting forth his praise. In a word, the whole man is for God, in soul and body, which by this blessed change are made his.

Lastly, This gracious change shines forth in the conversation. Even the outward man is renewed. A new heart makes newness of life. When the King's daughter is all glorious within, her cloathing is of wrought gold, Psal. xlv. 13. The single eye makes the whole body full of light, Mat. vi. 22. This change will appear in every part of a man's conversation; particularly in the

following things:

r. In the change of his company. He before despised the company of the saints, but now they are the excellent, in whom is all his delight: Psal. xvi. 3. I am a companion to all that fear thee, saith the royal Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 63. A renewed man joins himself with the saints: for he and they are like minded, in that which is their main work and business: they have all one new nature; they are travelling to Immanuel's land, and can converse together in the language of Canaan. In vain do men pretend to religion, while ungodly company is their choice; for a companion of fools shall be destroyed, Prov. xiii. 20. Religion will make a man shy of throwing himself into an ungodly family, or any unnecessary samiliarity with wicked men; as one that is clean will beware of going into an infected house.

clean will beware of going into an infected house.

2. In his relative capacity, he will be a new man.

Grace makes men gracious in their several relations, and naturally leads them to the conscientious performance of relative duties: It does not only make good

men, and good women, but makes good fubjects, good husbands, good wives, children, servants, and, in a word, good relatives in the church, common-wealth, and family. It is a just exception made against the religion of many, namely, that they are bad relatives, they are ill hulbands, wives, masters, servants, &c. How can we prove ourselves to be new creatures, if we be just such as we were before, in our several relations? 2 Cor. v. 17. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. Real godliness will gain a testimony to a man, from the conscience of his nearest relations; though they know more of his finful infirmities than others do, as we see in the case, 2 Kings iv. 2. Thy fervant, my busband, is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord.

3. In the way of his following his worldly business, there is a great change. It appears to be no more his all, as it was before. Though faints apply themselves to worldly business, as well as others, yet their hearts are not swallowed up in it. It is evident that they are carrying on a trade with heaven, as well as a trade with earth, Philip. iii. 20. For our conversation is in heaven. They go about their employment in the world, as a duty laid upon them by the Lord of all, doing their lawful business as the will of God, Eph. vi. 7. work-

ing, because he has said, Thou shalt not steal.

4. They have a special concern for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in the world: they espouse the interests of religion, and prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy, Psal. cxxxviii. 6. How privately soever they live, grace gives them a public spirit, which will concern itself in the ark and work of God, in the gospel of God, and in the people of God, those even of them whom they never saw. As children of God they naturally care for these things. They have a new concern for the spiritual good of others: no sooner do they taste of the power of grace themselves, but they are inclined to set up to be agents for Christ and holiness in the world; as appears in the case of the woman of Samaria, who when Christ had manifested him-

felf to her, went her way into the city, and faith unto the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ? John iv. 28, 29. They have seen and selt the evil of sin, and therefore pity the world lying in wickedness. They would fain pluck the brands out of the fire, remembering that they themselves were plucked out of it. They labour to commend religion to others, both by word and example, and rather deny themselves their liberty in indifferent things, than by the uncharitable use of them destroy others, I Cor. viii. 13. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no sees while the world standeth,

lest I make my brother to offend.

In their use of lawful comforts, there is a great change. They rest not in them, as their end; but use them as means to help them in their way. They draw their fatisfaction from the higher springs, even while the lower springs are running. Thus Hannah, having obtained a fon, rejoiced not fo much in the gift, as in the Giver, 1 Sam. ii. 1. And Hannah prayed, and faid, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord. Yea, when the comforts of life are gone, they can subsist without them, and rejoice in the Lord, although the fig-tree doth not blossom, Hab. iii. 17, 18. Grace teacheth to use the conveniencies of the present life passingly; and to shew a holy moderation in all things. The heart, which formerly revelled in these things without fear, is now shy of being over-much pleased with them, Being apprehensive of danger, it uses them warily; as the dogs of Egypt run, while they lap their water out of the river Nile, for fear of the crocodiles that are in it.

Lastly, This change shines forth in the man's performance of religious duties. He who lived in the neglect of them, will do so no more, if once the grace of God enter into his heart. If a man be new-born, he will desire the sincere milk of the word, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. Whenever the prayerless person gets the Spirit of grace, he will be in him a Spirit of supplication, Zech. xii. 10. It is as natural for one that is born again to pray, as for the new-born babe to cry, Acts ix. 11. Behold be pray-

eth. His heart will be a temple for God, and his house a church. His devotion, which before was superficial and formal, is now spiritual and lively; forasmuch as heart and tongue are touched with a live-coal from heaven: and he rests not in the mere performance of duties, as careful only to get his task done, but in every duty seeks communion with God in Christ; justly considering them as means appointed of God for that end, and reckoning himself disappointed if he miss of it. Thus far of the nature of regeneration.

The Resemblance between Natural and Spiritual Generation.

II. I come to shew why this change is called regeneration, a being born again. It is so called, because of the resemblance between natural and spiritual generation,

which lies in the following particulars.

First, Natural generation is a mysterious thing: and fo is spiritual generation, John iii. 8. The wind bloweth where it lifteth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: fo is every one that is born of the Spirit. The work of the Spirit is felt; but his way of working is a mystery we cannot apprehend. New light is let into the mind, and the will is renewed; but how that light is conveyed thither, how the will is fettered with cords of love, and how the rebel is made a willing captive, we can no more tell, than we can tell how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, Eccl. xi. 5. As a man hears the found of the wind, and finds it stirring, but knows not where it begins, and where it ends; fo is every one that is born of the Spirit: he finds the change that is made upon him; but how it is produced, he knows not. One thing he may know, that whereas he was blind, now he feeth: the feed of grace doth spring and grow up, he knoweth not how, Mark iv. 26, 27.

Secondly, In both, the creature comes to a being it had not before. The child is not, till it be generate; and a man has no gracious being, no being in grace, till he be regenerate. Regeneration is not so much the curing of a sick man, as the quickening of a dead man, Eph. ii. 1. 5. Man, in his deprayed state, is a mere non-

entity in grace, and is brought into a new being by the power of him who calleth things that be not as though they were; being created in Jesus Christ unto good works, Eph. ii. 10. Therefore our Lord Jesus, to give ground of hope to the Laodiceans, in their wretched and miserable state, proposed himself as the beginning of the creation of God, Rev. iii. 14. namely, the active beginning of it; for all things were made by him at first, John i. 3. From whence they might gather, that as he made them when they were nothing, he could make them over again, when worse than nothing; the same hand that made them his creatures, could make them new creatures.

Thirdly, As the child is passive in generation, so is the child of God in regeneration. The one contributes nothing to its own generation; neither does the other contribute any thing, by way of efficiency, to its own regeneration: for though a man may lay himself down at the pool, yet he hath no hand in moving the water, no power in performing the cure. One is born the child of a king, another the child of a beggar: the child has no hand at all in this difference. God leaves some in their deprayed state; others he brings into a state of grace, or regeneracy. If thou be thus honoured, no thanks to thee; for who maketh thee to differ from ano-

ther? I Cor. iv. 17.

Fourthly, There is a wonderful contexture of parts in both births. Admirable is the structure of man's body, in which there is such a variety of organs; nothing wanting, nothing superfluous. The Psalmist, considering his own body, looks on it as a piece of marvellous work; I am fearfully and wonderfully made, saith he, Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15. and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth, that is, in the womb, where I know not how the bones grow, more than I know what is doing in the lowest parts of the earth. In natural generation we are curiously wrought, as a piece of needle-work; as the word imports: even so it is in regeneration, Psal. xlv. 14. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle work, raiment curiously wrought. It is the same word in both texts. What that raiment

is, the apossele tells us, Eph. iv. 20. it is the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. This is the raiment which he saith, in the same place, we must put on; not excluding the imputed righteous of Christ. Both are curiously wrought, as masterpieces of the manifold wisdom of God. O the wonderful contexture of graces in the new creature! O glorious creature, new-made after the image of God! It is grace for grace in Christ, which makes up this new man, John i. 16. Even as in bodily generation, the child has member for member in the parent; has every member which the parent has, in a certain pro-

portion.

Fifthly All this, in both cases, hath its rise from that which in itself is very small and inconsiderable. O the power of God, in making fuch a creature of the corruptible feed, and much more in bringing forth the new creature from fo small beginnings! It is as the little cloud, like a man's hand, which spread, till beaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain, I Kings xviii. 44, 45. A man gets a word at a fermon, which hundreds besides him hear, and let slip: but it remains with him, works in him, and never leaves him, till the little world be turned upfide down by it; that is, till he become a new man. It is like the vapour that got up into Ahasuerus's head, and cut off fleep from his eyes, Esther vi. 1. which proved a spring of such motions, as never ceased, until Mordecai, in royal pomp, was brought on horseback through the streets, proud Haman trudging at his foot; the same Haman afterwards hanged, Mordecai advanced, and the church delivered from Haman's hellish plot. The grain of mustard seed—becometh a tree, Mat. xiii. 31, 32. God loves to bring great things out of small beginnings.

Sixthly, Natural generation is carried on by degrees, Jobx. 10. Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheefe? So is regeneration. It is with the foul ordinarily, in regeneration, as with the blind man, cured by our Lord, who first saw men as trees walking, asserted as very clearly, Mat. viii. 23, 24, 25. It

is true, regeneration being, strictly speaking, a passing from death to life, the soul is quickened in a moment; like as when the embryo is brought to perfection in the womb, the soul is insused into the lifeless lump. Nevertheless, we may imagine somewhat like conception in spiritual regeneration, whereby the soul is prepared for quickening; and the new creature is capable of growth, I Pet. ii. 2. and of life more abundantly, John x. 10.

Seventhly, In both there are new relations. The regenerate may call God, Father; for they are his children, John i. 12, 13. begotten of him, 1 Pet. i. 3. the bride the Lamb's wife (that is, the church) is their mother, Gal. iv. 26. They are related, as brethren and fifters, to angels and glorified faints; the family of heaven, They are of the heavenly stock: the meanest of them, the base things of the world, 2 Cor. i. 28. the kinless things (as the word imports) who cannot boast of the blood that runs in their veins, are yet, by their newbirth, near of kin with the excellent in the earth.

Eightly, There is a likeness between the parent and the child. Every thing that generates, generates its like; and the regenerate are partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. The moral persections of the divine nature are, in measure and degree, communicated to the renewed soul: thus the divine image is retrieved; so that, as the child resembles the father, the new creature resembles God himself, being holy as he is holy.

Laftly, As there is no birth without pain, both to the mother and to the child; so there is great pain in bringing forth the new creature. The children have more or less of these birth-pains, whereby they are pricked in their heart, Acts ii. 37. The soul hath fore pains, when under conviction and humiliation. A wounded spirit who can bear? The mother is pained; Zion travels, Isa. xlvi. 8. she sighs, groans, crieth, and hath hard labour, in her ministers and members, to bring forth children to her Lord, Gal. iv. 19. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you. Never was a mother more feelingly touched with joy, that a man child was born into the world, than she is upon the

new birth of her children. But what is more remarkable than all this, we read not only of our Lord Jesus Christ's travail (or toil) of soul, Isa. liii. 11. but (what is more directly to our purpose) of his pains, or pangs, as of one travailing in child-birth; so the word used. Acts ii. 24. properly signifies. Well may he call the new creature, as Rachel called her dear bought son, Benoni, i. e. the son of my sorrow; and as she called another Naphtali, i. e. my wrestling: for the pangs of that travail put him to strong crying and tears, Heb. v. 7. yea, into an agony and bloody sweat, Luke xxii. 44. and in the end he died of these pangs; they became to him the pains of death, Acts ii. 24.

The Doctrine of Regeneration applied.

Use I. By what is faid, you may try whether you are in the state of grace, or not. If you be brought out of the state of wrath and ruin, into the state of grace, or falvation, you are new creatures, you are born again. But you will fay, How shall we know whether we be born again, or not? Anfw. Were you to ask me if the fun were rifen, and how you should know whether it were risen or not; I would bid you look up to the heavens, and fee it with your eyes. And, would you know if the light be rifen in your heart? Look in, and fee. Grace is light, and discovers itself. Look into thy mind; fee if it hath been illuminated in the knowledge of God. Hast thou been inwardly taught what God is? Were thine eyes ever turned inward, to see thyself, the sinfulness of thy depraved state; the corruption of thy nature, the fins of thy heart and life? Wast thou ever led into a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin? Have thine eyes seen King Jesus in his beauty; the manifold wisdom of God in him, his tranfcendent excellency, and absolute fulness and sufficiency, with the vanity and emptiness of all things else? Next, what change is there on thy will? Are the fetters taken off, wherewith it was fometimes bound up from moving heaven-ward? Has thy will got a new turn? Dost thou find an aversion to sin, and a proneness to good, wrought in thy heart? Is thy foul turned

towards God, as thy chief end? Is thy will new moulded, into some measure of conformity to the preceptive and providential will of God? Art thou heartily reconciled to the covenant of peace, and fixedly difposed to the receiving of Christ, as he is offered in the gospel? And as to a change on your affections, are they rectified, and placed on right objects? Are your defires going out after God? are they to his name, and the remembrance of him? Isa. xxvi. 8. Are your hopes in him? Is your love fet upon him, and your hatred fet against sin? Does your offending a good God affect your heart with forrow? and do you fear fin more than fuffering? Are your affections regulated? are they, with respect to created comforts, brought down, as being too high; and, with respect to God in Christ, raised up, as being too low? Has he the chief feat in your heart? and are all your lawful worldly comforts and enjoyments laid at his feet? Has thy conscience been enlightened and awakened, refusing all ease, but from the application of the blood of the Redeemer? Is thy memory fanctified, thy body confecrated to the fervice of God? and art thou now walking in newness of life? Thus you may discover whether you are born again, or not.

But, for your further help in this matter, I will discourse a little of another fign of regeneration, namely, the love of the brethren; an evidence whereby the weakeft and most timorous faints have often had comfort, when they could have little or no consolation from other marks proposed to them. This the apostle lays down, I John iii. 14. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. It is not to be thought that the apostle, by the brethren, in this place, means brethren by a common relation to the first Adam. but to the Second Adam, Christ Jesus: because, however true it is, that univerfal benevolence, a good-will to the whole race of mankind, takes place in the renewed foul, as being a lively lineament of the divine image; yet the whole context speaks of those that are the fons of God, ver. 1, 2. children of God, ver. 10. born of God, ver. 9. diftinguishing between the children of God, and the children of the devil, ver. 10. between those that are of the devil, ver. 8. 12. and those that are of God, ver. 10. The text itself comes in as a reason why we should not marvel that the world hates the brethren, the children of God, ver. 13. How can we marvel at it, seeing the love of the brethren is an evidence of one's having passed from death to life? Therefore it were absurd to look for that love amongst the men of the world, who are dead in trespasses and sins. They cannot love the brethren; no wonder, then, that they hate them. Wherefore it is plain, that by brethren here, are meant brethren by regeneration.

Now, in order to fet this mark of regeneration in a true light, confider these three things: (1.) This love to the brethren is a love to them as fuch. Then do we love them in the fense of the text, when the grace, or image of God in them, is the chief motive of our love to them. When we love the godly for their godliness, the faints for their fanctity or holiness, then we love God in them, and so may conclude we are born of God; for every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him, I John v. 1. Hypocrites may love saints, on account of civil relations to them; because of their obliging conversation; for their being of the same opinion with themselves in religious matters; and on many other fuch accounts, whereby wicked men may be induced to love the godly. But happy they who love them for naked grace in them; for their heaven-born temper and disposition; who can pick this pearl out of a dunghill of infirmities in and about them; lay hold on it, and love them for it. (2.) It is a love that will be given to all in whom the grace of God appears. They that love one faint, because he is a faint, will have love to all the faints, Eph. i. 5. They will love all who, to their discerning, bear the image of God. They that cannot love a gracious person in rags, but confine their love to those of them who wear gay cloathing, have not this love to the brethren in them. Those who confine their love to a party; to whom God has not confined his grace, are fouls too narrow to put among the children. In what points fo-

ever men differ from us, in their judgment or way, yet if they appear to agree with us, in love to God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and in bearing his image, we shall love them as brethren, if we are of the heavenly family. (3.) If this love be in us, the more grace any person appears to be possessed of, he will be the more beloved by us. The more vehemently the holy fire of grace doth flame in any, the hearts of true Christians will be the more warmed in love to them. It is not with the faints as with many other men, who make themselves the standards for others; and love them fo far as they think they are like themselves But if they feem to out-shine, and darken them, their love is turned to hatred and envy; and they endeavour to detract from the due praise of their examplary piety; because nothing relisheth with them, in the practice of religion, that goes beyond their own measure; what of the life and power of religion appears in others, ferves only to raife the ferpentine grudge in their Pharifaical hearts. But as for them that are born again, their love and affection to the brethren bears proportion to the degrees of the divne image which they difcern in them.

Now, if you would improve these things to the knowledge of your state, I would advise you, (1.) To fet apart some time, when you are at home, for a review of your case; and try your state by what has been faid. Many have comfort and clearness as to their state, at a fermon, who in a little time lofe it again: because, while they hear the word preached, they make application of it; but do not confider these things more deliberately and leifurely when alone. The action is too fudden and short, to give lasting comfort. It is often so indeliberate, that it has bad consequences. Therefore fet about this work at home, after earnest and ferious prayer to God for his help in it. Complain not of your want of time, while the night follows the bufy day; nor of place, while fields and out-houses are to be got. (2.) Renew your repentance before the Lord. Guilt lying on the conscience, unrepented of, may darken all your evidences of grace It provokes the Spirit of grace to withdraw; and when he goes, our light ceases. It is not fit time for a faint to read his evidences, when the candle is blown out by fome conscience-wounding guilt. Lastly, Exert the powers of the new nature; let the graces of the divine Spirit in you, discover themselves by action. If you would know whether there is facred fire in your breaft, or not, you must blow the coal; for although it be, and be a live-coal; yet if it be under the ashes, it will give you no light. Settle in your hearts a firm purpose, through the grace that is in Christ Jesus, to comply with every known duty, and watch against every known fin; having readiness of mind to be instructed in what you know not. If gracious fouls would thus manage their enquiries into their state, it is likely that they would have a comfortable iffue. And if others would take fuch a folemn review, and make trial of their state, impartially examining themselves before the tribunal of their consciences, they might have a timely discovery of their own naughtiness; but the neglect of felf-examination leaves most men under sad delusions as to there state; and deprives many faints of the comfortable fight of the grace of God in them.

But that I may afford some further help to true Christians in their enquiries into their state; I shall propose and briefly answer some cases or doubts, which may possibly hinder some persons from the comfortable view of their happy state. The children's bread must not be with-held; though while it is held forth to them, the

dogs should fnatch at it.

Case 1. I doubt if I be regenerate, because, I know not the precise time of my conversion; nor can I trace the particular steps in the way in which it was brought to pass. Answ. Though it is very desirable, to be able to give an account of the beginning, and the gradual advances of the Lord's work upon our souls, as some saints can distinctly do, (howbeit the manner of the Spitit's working is still a mystery) yet this is not necessary to evidence the truth of grace. Happy he that can say, in this case, as the blind man in the gospel, One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. As, when we see slame, we know there is fire; though we know

not how nor when it began: fo the truth of grace in us may be discerned, though we know not how, nor when it was dropped into our hearts. If thou canst perceive the happy change which is wrought on thy soul; if thou findest thy mind is enlightened, thy will inclined to comply with the will of God in all things; especially to fall in with the divine plan of salvation, through the crucified Redeemer; in vain dost thou trouble thyself, and refuse comfort, because thou knowest not how

and what way it was brought about.

CASE 2. If I were a new creature, fin could not prevail against me as it doth. Answ. Though we must not lay pillows, for hypocrites to rest their heads upon; who indulge themselves in their fins, and make the doctrine of God's grace fubservient to their lusts, lying down contentedly in the bond of iniquity, like men that are fond of golden chains; yet it must be owned, the just man falleth seven times a day; and iniquity may prevail against the children of God. But if thou art groaning under the weight of the body of death, the corruption of thy nature; loathing thyfelf for the fins of thy heart and life; striving to mortify thy lusts; fleeing daily to the blood of Christ for pardon; and looking to his Spirit for fanctification; though thou mayest be obliged to fay with the Psalmist, Iniquities prevail against me: yet thou mayest add with him, As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away, Pfal. lxv. 3. the new creature doth not yet possess the house alone: it dwells by the fide of an ill neighbour, namely, remaining corruption, the reliques of depraved nature. These strugglettogether for the mastery: The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the sless, Gal. v. 17. And sometimes corruption prevails, bringing the child of God into captivity to the law of fin, Rom. vii. 23. Let not, therefore, the prevailing of corruption make thee, in this case, conclude thou art none of God's children: but let it humble thee, to be the more watchful, and to thirst the more intensely after Jesus Christ, his blood and Spirit; and that very disposition will evidence a principle of grace in thee, which feeks the destruction of fin, that prevails so often against thee.

CASE 3. I find the motions of fin in my heart more violent fince the Lord began his work on my foul, than they were before that time. Can this confift with a change of my nature? Anfw. Dreadful is the case of many, who, after God has had a remarkable dealing with their fouls, tending to their reformation, have thrown off all bonds, and have become grofly and openly immoral and profane; as if the devil had returned into their hearts with feven spirits worse than himself. All I shall say to such persons is, that their flate is exceeding dangerous; they are in danger of finning against the Holy Ghost: therefore let them repent, before it be too late. But if it be not thus with you; though corruption is stirring more violently than formerly, as if all the forces of hell were raifed, to hold fast, or bring back a fugitive; yet these stirrings may confift with a change of your nature. When the reftraint of grace is newly laid upon corruption, it is no wonder if it acts more vigorously than before, warring against the law of the mind, Rom. vii. 23. The motions of fin may really be most violent, when the new principle is brought in to cast it out. The fun, sending its beams through the window, discovers the motes in the house, and their motions, which were not seen before: fo the light of grace may discover the risings and actings of corruption, in another manner than ever the man faw them before, though they really do not rife nor act more vigoroufly. Sin is not quite dead in the regenerate foul; it is but dying, and dying a lingering death, being crucified: no wonder there be great fightings, when it is fick at the heart, and death is at the door. Besides, temptations may be more in number, and stronger, while Satan is striving to bring you back, who are escaped, than while he only endeavoured to retain you: After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction, says the apostle to the Hebrews, chap. x. 32. But cast not away your considence, ver. 34. Remember, his grace is sufficient for you; and the God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet swortly. Pharaoh and his Egyptians never made fucli a formidable appearance against the Israelites as at the Red Sea, after they were

brought out of Egypt: but then were the pursuers nearest to a total overthrow, Exod. xiv. Let not this case, therefore, make you raze your foundations: but be ye emptied of yourselves, and strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and you shall come off victorious.

CASE 4. But when I compare my love to God, with my love to some created enjoyments, I find the pulse of my affections beat stronger to the creature than the Creator. How then can I call him Father? Nay, alas! these turnings of heart within me, and glowings of affection to him, which I had, are gone; fo that I fear all the love which I ever had to the Lord, has been but a fit and flash of affection, such as hypocrites often have. Answ. It cannot be denied, that the predominant love of the world is a certain mark of an unregenerate state, 1 John iii. 15. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Nevertheless, those are not always the strongest affections which are most violent. A man's affections may be more moved, on fome occasions, by an object that is little regarded, than by another that is exceedingly beloved: even as a little brook sometimes makes a greater noise than a great river. The strength of our affections is to be measured by the firmness and fixedness of the root; not by the violence of their actings. Suppose a person meeting with a friend, who has been long abroad, finds his affections more vehemently acting towards his friend on that occasion, than towards his own wife and children; will he therefore fay, that he loves his friend more than them? Surely no. Even fo, although the Christian may find himself more moved in his love to the creature, than in his love to God, yet it is not therefore to be faid, that he loves the creature more than God; feeing love to God is always more firmly rooted in a gracious heart, than love to any created enjoyment whatever; as appears when competition arises in such a manner, that the one or the other is to be foregone. Would you then know your case? Retire into your own hearts, and there lay the two in the balance, and try which of them weighs down the other. Ask thyself, as in the fight of God, whether thou wouldst part with

Christ for the creature, or part with the creature for Christ, if thou wert left to thy choice in the matter? If you find your heart disposed to part with what is dearest to you in the world for Christ, at his call, you have no reason to conclude you love the creature more than God; but on the contrary, that you love God more than the creature, although you do not feel fuch violent motions in the love of God, as in the love of some created thing, Mat. x. 37. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. Luke xvi. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, be cannot be my disciple. From which texts compared we may infer, that he who hates, i. e. is ready to part with, father and mother for Christ, is, in our account, one that loves them less than him; and not one who loves father and mother more than him. Moreover, you are to confider, that there is a two-fold love to Christ. (1.) There is a fensible love to him, which is felt as a dart in the heart, and makes a holy love-fickness in the soul, arising either from want of enjoyment, as in the case of the spouse, Cant. v. 8. I charge you, O daughters of ferusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love; or else from the fulness of it, as in Cant. ii. 5. Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples, for I am fick of love. These glowings of affections are usually wrought in young converts, who are ordinarily made to fing in the days of their youth, Hof. ii. 14. While the fire-edge is upon the young convert, he looks upon others, reputed to be godly, and not finding them in such a temper or disposition as himself, he is ready to censure them; and to think there is far less religion in the world than indeed there is. But when his own cup comes to fettle below the brim, and he finds that in himself which made him question the state of others, he is more humbled, and feels more and more the necessity of daily recourse to the blood of Christ for pardon, and to the Spirit of Christ for sanctification; and thus grows downwards in humiliation, felf-loathing, and felf-denial. (3.) There is a rational love to Christ, which, without these sensible emotions felt in the former case, evidences itself by a dutiful regard to the divine authority and command, When a person bears such a love to Christ; though the vehement stirrings of affection be wanting, yet he is truly tender of offending a gracious God; endeavours to walk before him unto all pleasing; and is grieved at the heart for what is displeasing unto him, I John v. 3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. Now, although that sensible love doth not always continue with you, you have no reason to deem it a hypocritical sit, while the rational love remains with you, more than a loving and saithful wise needs question her love to her husband, when her sondness is abated.

CASE 5. The attainments of hypocrites and apostates are a terror to me, and come like a shaking storm on me, when I am about to conclude, from the marks of grace which I feem to find in myfelf, that I am in the state of grace. Answ. These things should indeed stir us up to a most serious and impartial examination of ourselves; but ought not to keep us in continued sufpence as to our state. Sirs, you see the outside of hypocrites, their duties, their gifts, their tears, and fo on, but you see not their inside; you do not discern their hearts, the bias of their spirits. Upon what you fee of them, you found a judgment of charity as to their state; and you do well to judge charitably in such a case, because you cannot know the secret springs of their actings. But you are speaking of, and ought to have a judgment of certainty as to your own state; and therefore are to look into that part of religion which none in the world but yourselves can discern in you; and which you can as little see in others. In hypocrites, religion may appear far greater than in that of a fincere foul: but that which makes the greatest figure in the eyes of men, is often of least worth before God. would rather utter one of those groans which the apostle speaks of, Rom. viii. 26. than shed Esau's tears, have Balaam's prophetic spirit, or the joy of the stony ground hearer. The fire that shall try every man's work, will try not of what bulk it is, but of what fort it is, I Cor. iii. 13. Though you may know what bulk of religion another has; and that it be more bulky

than your own, yet God doth not regard that; why then do you make fuch a matter of it? It is impossible for you, without divine revelation, certainly to know of what fort another man's religion is: but you may certainly know what fort your own is of, without extraordinary revelation; otherwise the apostle would not exhort the faints to give diligence to make their calling and election fure, 2 Pet. i. 10. Therefore the attainments of hypocrites and apostates should not disturb you, in your ferious inquiry into your own state. I will tell you two things, wherein the meanest saints go beyond the most refined hypocrites. (1.) In denying themselves; renouncing all confidence in themselves, and their own works, acquiescing in, being well-pleased with, and venturing their souls upon, God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, Matt. v. 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And chap. ix. 6. Bleffed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. Phil. iii. 3. We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (2.) In a real hatred of all fin; being willing to part with every lust, without exception, and to comply with every duty which the Lord makes, or shall make known to them, Pfal. cxix. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Try yourselves by these. Case 6. I see myself fall so far short of the saints

mentioned in the Scriptures, and of feveral excellent persons of my own acquaintance, that when I look on them, I can hardly look on myself as one of the same family with them. Answ. It is indeed matter of humiliation, that we do not get forward to that measure of grace and holiness which we see is attainable in this life. This should make us more vigorously press towards the mark: but furely it is from the devil, that weak Christians make a rack for themselves, of the attainments of the strong. To yield to this temptation, is as unreasonable as for a child to dispute away his relation to his father, because he is not of the same sta-There are faints of seture with his elder brethren. veral fizes in Christ's family; some fathers, some young men, and some little children, 1 John iii. 13, 14.

CASE 7. I never read in the word of God, nor did I ever know, of a child of God fo tempted, and fo left of God, as I am; and therefore no faint's cafe being like mine, I cannot but conclude that I am none of their number. Answ. This objection arises to some from their unacquaintedness with the Scriptures, and with experienced Christians. It is profitable, in this case, to impart the matter to some experienced Christian friend, or to some godly minister. This has been a bleffed means of peace to some persons; while their case, which appeared to them to be singular, has been proved to have been the case of other saints. The Scriptures give instances of very horrid temptations, wherewith the faints have been affaulted. Job was tempted to blaspheme: this was the great thing the devil aimed at, in the case of that great saint, Job i. 11. He will curse thee to thy face. Chap. ii. 9. Curse God and die. Asaph was tempted to think it was in vain to be religious, which was in effect to throw off all religion. Pfal. lxviii. 13. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain Yea, Christ himself was tempted to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, and to worship the devil, Matt. iv. 6. 9. And many of the children of God have not only been attacked with, but have actually yielded to, very gross temptations for a time. Peter denied Christ, and cursed and swore that he knew him not, Mark xiv. 71. Paul, when a perfecutor, compelled even faints to blaspheme, Acts xxvi. 10, 11. Many of the faints can, from their fad experience, bear witness to very gross temptations, which have astonished their spirits, made their very flesh to tremble, and sickened their bodies. Satan's fiery darts make terrible work; and will cost pains to quench them, by a vigorousmanaging of the shield of faith, Eph. vi. 16. Sometimes he makes fuch desperate attacks, that never was one more put to it, in running to and fro, without intermission, to quench the fire-balls incessantly thrown into his house by an enemy, designing to burn the house about him, than the poor tempted faint is, to repel fatanical injections. But these injections, these horrid temptations, though they are a dreadful affliction,
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they are not the fins of the tempted, unless they make them theirs, by confenting to them. They will be charged upon the tempter alone, if they be not confented to; and will no more be laid to the charge of the tempted party, than a bastard's being laid down at a

chaste man's door, will fix guilt upon him.

But suppose neither minister nor private Christian, to whom you go, can tell you of any who has been in your case; yet you ought not thence to infer, that your case certainly is singular, far less to give up hope: for it is not to be thought, that every godly minister, or private Christian, has had experience of all the cases which a child of God may be in. We need not doubt but some have had distresses known only to God, and their own consciences; and so to others these distresses are as if they had never been. Yea, and though the Scriptures contain suitable directions for every case which a child of God can be in, and these illustrated with a fufficient number of examples; yet it is not to be imagined, that there are in the Scriptures perfect instances of every particular case incident to the faints. Therefore, though you cannot find an instance of your case in the Scripture, yet bring your case to it, and you shall find suitable remedies prescribed there for it. Study rather to make use of Christ for your case, who has falve for all fores, than to know if ever any was in your Though one should shew you an instance of your case, an undoubted saint, yet none could promise that it would certainly give you ease: for a fcrupulous conscience would readily find out some difference. And if nothing but a perfect conformity of another case to yours will fatisfy, it will be hard, if not impossible, to fatisfy you. For it is with people's cases, as with their natural faces. Though the faces of all men are of one make; and some are so very like others, that at first view we are ready to take them for the same; yet, if you view them more accurately, you will fee fomething in every face, distinguishing it from all others; though possibly you cannot tell what it is. Wherefore I conclude, that if you can find in your-felves the marks of regeneration, proposed to you

from the word; you ought to conclude you are in the state of grace, though your case were singular, which

is indeed unlikely.

CASE 8. The afflictions I meet with are strange and unusual. I doubt if ever a child of God was tried with fuch dispensations of providence as I am. Answ. Much of what was faid on the preceding case, may be helpful in this. Holy Job was affaulted with this temptation, Job v. 1. To which of the faints wilt thou turn? But he rejected it, and held fast his integrity. The apostle supposes that Christians may be tempted to think frange concerning the fiery trial, 1 Pet. iv. 12. But they have need of larger experience than Solomon's, who will venture to fav, See this is new, Eccl. i. 10. What though, in respect of the outward dispensations of providence, it happen to you according to the work of the wicked? yet you may be just notwithstanding; according to Solomon's observation, Eccles. viii. 14. Sometimes we travel in ways where we can neither perceive the prints of the foot of man nor beaft; yet we cannot from thence conclude that there was never any there before us: fo though thou canst not perceive the soot-steps of the slock, in the way of thine affliction, thou must not therefore conclude that thou art the first who ever travelled that road. But what if it were so? Some one faint or other must be first, in drinking of each bitter cup the rest have drunk of. 'What warrant have you or I to limit the holy One of Israel to a trodden path, in his dispensations towards us? Thy way is in the fea, and thy path in the great waters: and thy fooisteps are not known, Pfal. lxxvii. 19. If the Lord should carry you to heaven by some retired road, (so to fpeak) you would have no ground to complain. Learn to allow fovereignty a latitude; be at your duty: and let no affliction cast a vail over any evidences you otherwise have for your being in the state of grace : for no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them, Eccles. ix. 1.

Use II. You that are strangers to this new-birth, be convinced of the absolute necessity of it. Are all who are in the state of grace born again? Then you

have neither part nor lot in it, who are not born again. I must tell you, in the words of our Lord and Saviour, (and O that he would speak them to your hearts) you must be born again, John iii. 7. For your conviction,

confider these few things:

First, Regeneration is absolutely necessary to qualify you to do any thing really good and acceptable to God. While you are not born again, your best works are but glittering fins; for though the matter of them is good, they are quite marred in the making. Confider, (1.) That without regeneration there is no faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb, ix 6. Faith is a vital act of the new-born foul. The evangelist, shewing the different entertainment which our Lord Jesus had from different persons, some receiving him, fome rejecting him, points at regenerating grace as the true rife of that difference, without which never any one would have received him. He tells us, that as many as received him, were those which were born-of God, John i. 11, 12, 13. Unregenerate men may prefume; but true faith they cannot have. Faith is a flower that grows not in the field of nature. As the tree cannot grow without a root, neither can a man believe without the new nature, whereof the principle of believing is a part. (2.) Without regeneration, a man's works are dead works. As is the principle, so must the effects be: if the lungs be rotten, the breath will be unfavoury; and he who at best is dead in fin, his works at best will be but dead works. Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure-being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate, Tit. i. 15, 16. Could we say of a man, that he is more blameless in his life than any other in the world; that he macerates his body with fasting; and has made his knees as horns with continual praying; but he is not born again: that exception would marr all. As if one should say, There is a well-proportioned body, but the foul is gone; it is but a dead lump. This is a melting confideration. Thou dost many things materially good: but God faith, All these things avail not, as long as I fee the old nature reigning in the man,

Gal. vi. 15. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcisson availeth

any thing, nor uncircumcifion, but a new creature.

If thou art not born again, (1.) All thy reformation is naught in the fight of God. Thou hast shut the door, but the thief is still in the house. It may be thou art not what once thou wast: yet thou art not what thou must be, if ever thou see heaven; for except a man be born again, he cannot fee the kingdom of God, John iii. 3. (2.) Thy prayers are an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xv. 8. It may be others admire thy feriousness, thou crieft as for thy life; but God accounts for the opening of thy mouth, as one would account of the opening of a grave full of rottenness, Rom. iii. 13. Their throat is an open sepulchre. Others are affected with thy prayers; which feem to them, as if they would rend the heavens; but God accounts them but as the howling of a dog: They have not cried unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds, Hof. vii. 14. Others take thee for a wreftler and prevailer with God; but he can take no delight in thee, nor thy prayers, Isa. lxvi. 13. He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck .- He that burneth incense, as if he bleffed an idol. Why? because thou art yet in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity! (3.) All thou hast done for God, and in his cause in the world, though it may be followed with temporal rewards, yet is loft as to divine acceptance. This is clear from the case of Jehu, who was indeed rewarded with a kingdom, for his executing due vengeance upon the house of Ahab; as being a work good for the matter of it, because it was commanded of God, as you may fee, 2 Kings x. 13. yet was he punished for it in his posterity, because he did it not in a right manner, Hos. i. 4. I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the bouse of Jehu. God looks mainly to the heart: and if so, truly, though thy outward appearance be fairer than that of many others, yet the hidden man of thy heart is loathfome; you look well before men, but are not as Moses was, fair to God, as the margin hath it, Acts vii. 20. O what a difference is there between the characters of Asa and Ama-

ziah! The high places were not removed: nevertheless, Asa his heart was perfect with the Lord all his days, I Kings x. 14. Amaziah did that which was right in the fight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart, 2 Chron. xxv. 2. It may be thou art zealous against sin in others, and dost admonish them of their duty, and reprove them for their fin; and they hate thee, because thou dost thy duty: but I must tell thee, God hates thee too, because thou dost it not in a right manner; and that thou canst never do, whilst thou art not born again. Lastly, All thy struggles against sin, in thine own heart and life are naught. The proud Pharifee, afflicted his body with fasting, and God struck his soul, in the mean time, with a sentence of condemnation. Luke xviii. Balaam struggled with his covetous temper, to that degree, that though he loved the wages of unrighteousness, yet he would not win them by cursing Israel: but he died the death of the wicked, Numb. xxxi. 8. All thou dost, while in an unregenerate state, is for thyself: therefore it will fare with thee as with a fubject, who having reduced the rebels, puts the crown on his own head, and lofeth all his good fervice, and his head too.

Object. If it be thus with us, then we need never perform any religious duty at all. Answ. The conclufion is not just. No inability of thine can excuse thee from the duty which God's law lays on thee: and there is less evil in thy doing thy duty, than there is in the omitting of it. But there is a difference between omitting of duty, and the doing of it as thou dost it. man orders the masons to build him a house. If they quite neglect the work, that will not be accepted; if they build on the old rotten foundation, that will not please neither: but they must raze the foundation, and build on firm ground. Go thou and do likewise. In the mean time, it is not in vain for thee, even for thee, to feek the Lord: for though he regards thee not, yet he may have respect to his own ordinances, and do thee good thereby, as was faid before.

Secondly, Without regeneration there is no communion with God. There is a fociety on earth, whole

fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, I John i. 3. But out of that society, all the unregenerate are excluded; for they are all enemies to God, as you heard before at large. Now, can two walk together, except they be agreed? Amos iii. 3. They are all unholy: and what communion hath light with darkness—Christ with Belial? 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. They may have a shew and semblance of holiness; but they are strangers to true holiness, and therefore without God in the world. How sad is it, to be employed in religious duties, yet to have no fellowship with God in them! You would not be content with your meat, unless it nourished you; nor with your cloaths, unless they kept you warm: and how can you satisfy yourselves with your duties, while you have no communion with God in them?

Thirdly, Regeneration is absolutely necessary to qualify you for heaven. None go to heaven but they that are made meet for it, Col. i. 12. As it was with Solomon's temple, I Kings vi. 7. fo it is with the temple above. It is built of stone, made ready before it is brought thither; namely, of lively stones, 1 Pet. ii. 5. rerought for the self same thing, 2 Cor. v. 5. for they cannot be laid in that glorious building, just as they came out of the quarry of depraved nature. Jewels of gold are not meet for swine, and far less jewels of glory for unrenewed finners. Beggars, in their rags, are not meet for king's houses; nor sinners to enter into the King's palace, without the raiment of needle-work, Pf. xlvi. 14, 15. What wife man would bring fish out of the water, to feed in his meadows? Or fend his oxen to feed in the sea? Even as little are the unregenerate meet for heaven; or heaven meet for them. It would never be liked by them.

The unregenerate would find fault with heaven on feveral accounts. As, (1.) That it is a strange country. Heaven is the renewed man's native country: his Father is in heaven; his mother is Jerusalem, which is above, Gal. iv. 26. He is born from above, John iii. 3. heaven is his home, 1 Cor. v. 1. therefore he looks on himself as a stranger on this earth, and his head is homeward, Heb. xi. 16. They desire a better country,

that is an heavenly country. But the unregenerate man is the man of the earth, Pfal. x. 18. written in the earth, Jer. xvii. 13. Now, home is home, be it never fo homely: therefore he minds earthly things, Phil. iii. 19. There is a peculiar sweetness in our native soil; and hardly are men drawn to leave it, and dwell in a strange country. In no case does that prevail more than in this; for unrenewed men would guit their pretenfions to heaven, were it not that they fee they cannot make a better bargain. (2.) There is nothing in heaven that they delight in, as agreeable to the carnal heart, Rev. xxi. 27. for there shall in no wife enter into it any thing that defileth. When Mahomet gave out paradife to be a place of fenfual delights, his religion was greedily embraced; for that is the heaven men naturally choose. If the covetous man could get bags full of gold there, and the voluptuous man could promise himself his sensual delights, they might be reconciled to heaven, and meet for it too: but fince is is not so, though they may utter fair words about it, truly it has little of their hearts. (3.) Every corner there is filled with that which of all things they have the leaft liking for; and that is holiness, true holiness, perfect holiness. Were one that abhors swine's slesh, bidden to a feast, where all the dishes were of that fort of meat, but variously prepared, he would find fault with every dish at the table, notwithstanding all the art used to make them palatable. It is true, there is joy in heaven, but it is holy joy; there are pleasures in heaven, but they are holy pleasures; there are places in heaven, but it is holy ground. That holinels that is in every place, and in every thing there, would marr all to the unregenerate. (4.) Were they carried thither, they would not only change their place, which would be a great heart-break to them; but they would change their company too. Truly, they would never like the company there, who care not for communion with God here; nor value the fellowship of his people, at least in the vitals of practical godliness. Many, indeed, mix themselves with the godly on earth, to procure a name to themselves, and to cover the naughtiness of their hearts; but that trade cannot be managed there. (5.) They would never like the employment of heaven, they care so little for it now. The business of the saints there, would be an intolerable burden to them, seeing it is not agreeable to their nature. To be taken up in beholding, admiring, and praising of him that sitteth on the throne, and of the Lamb, would be work unsuitable, and therefore unsavoury, to an unrenewed soul. Lasty, They would find this fault with it, that the whole is of everlasting continuance. This would be a killing ingredient in it to them. How would such, as now account the Sabbath-day a burden, brook the celebrating of an everlasting Sabbath in the heavens?

Laftly, Regeneration is absolutely necessary to your being admitted into heaven, John iii. 3. No heaven without it. Though carnal men could digest all those things which make heaven unfuitable for them, yet God will never bring them hither. Therefore born again you must be, elle you shall never see heaven; Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, John iii. 3. Here is a bar before you, that men and angels cannot remove. To hope for heaven, in the face of this peremptory sentence, is to hope that God will recall his word, and facrifice his truth and faithfulness to your safety; which is infinitely more than to hope that the earth shall be forfaken for you, and the rock removed out of his place. (2.) There is no holiness without regeneration. It is the new man which is created in true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. And no hear ven without holiness; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. Will the gates of pearl be opened to let in dogs and swine? No; their place is without, Rev. xxii. 15. God will not admit fuch into the holy place of communion with him here; and will he admit them into the holiest of all hereaster? Will he take the children of the devil, and give them to fit with him in his throne? Or will he bring the unclean into the city, whose street is pure gold? Be not deceived; grace and glory are but two links of one chain, which God hath joined, and no man shall put afunder.

None is transplanted into the paradife above, but out of the nursery of grace below. If you be unholy while in this world, you will be for ever miserable in the world to come. (3.) All the unregenerate are without Christ, and therefore having no hope while in that case, Eph. ii. 12. Will Christ prepare mansions of glory for them that refuse to receive him into their hearts? Nay, rather, will he not laugh at their calamity, who now fet at nought all his counsel? Prov. i. 25, 26. Lastly, There is an infallible connection between a finally unregenerate state and damnation, arising from the nature of the things themselves, and from the decree of heaven, which is fixed and immoveable as mountains of brass, John iii. 3. Rom. viii. 6. To be carnally minded is death. An unregenerate state is hell in the bud. It is eternal destruction in embryo, growing daily, though thou dost not discern it. Death is painted on many a fair face in this life. Depraved nature makes men meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the damned, in utter darkness. (1.) The heart of stone within thee is a finking weight. As a stone naturally goes downward; so the hard stony-heart tends downward to the bottomless pit. You are hardened against reproof: though you are told your danger, yet you will not see it, you will not believe it. But remember that the conscience, being now feared with a hot iron, is a fad presage of everlasting burnings. (2.) Your unfruitfulness under the means of grace, fits you for the ax of God's judgments. Mat. iii. 10. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire. The withered branch is fewel for the fire, John xv. 16. Tremble at this, you despifers of the gospel: if you be not thereby made meet for heaven, you will be like the barren ground, bearing briars and thorns, nigh unto curfing, whose end is to be burned, Heb. vi. 8. (3.) The hellish dispositions of mind, which discover themselves in profanity of life, fit the guilty for the regions of horror. A profane life will have a miserable end. They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. Think on this, ye prayerless persons,

ye mockers of religion, ye curfers and fwearers, ye unclean and unjust persons, who have not so much as moral honesty to keep you from lying, cheating, and stealing. What fort of a tree think you it to be, upon which these fruits grow? Is it a tree of righteousness which the Lord hath planted? Or is it not such an one as cumbers the ground, which God will pluck up for fewel to the fire of his wrath? (4.) Your being dead in fin, makes you meet to be wrapped in flames of brimstone, as a winding-sheet; and to be buried in the bottomless pit, as in a grave. Great was the cry in Egypt, when the first-born in each family was dead; but are there not many families, where all are dead together? Nay, many there are who are twice dead, plucked up by the roots. Sometimes in their life they have been rouzed by apprehensions of death, and its consequences; but now they are fo far on their way to the land of darknefs, that they hardly ever have the least glimmering of light from heaven. (5.) The darkness of your minds presages eternal darkness. O the horrid ignorance which some are plagued with; while others, who have got some rays of the light of reason in their heads, are utterly void of spiritual light in their hearts! If you knew your case, you would cry out, Oh! darkness! darkness! darkness, making way for the blackness of darkness for ever! The face-covering is upon you already, as condemned persons; so near are you to everlafting darkness. It is only Jesus Christ who can stop the execution, pull the napkin off the face of the condemned malefactor, and put a pardon into his hand, Isa. xxx. 7. He will destroy, in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people, i. e. The face-covering cast over the condemned, as in Haman's case, Esther vii. 8. As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. Lastly, The chains of darkness you are bound with in the prison of your deprayed state, Isa. lxi. 1. fits you to be cast into the burning fiery furnace. Ah miserable men! Sometimes their consciences stir within them, and they begin to think of amending their ways. But alas! they are in chains; they cannot do it. They are chained by the heart?

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their lusts cleave so fast to them, that they eannot, nay, they will not, shake them off. Thus you see what affinity there is between an unregenerate state, and the state of the damned, the state of absolute and irretrievable misery. Be convinced, then, that you must be born again; put a high value on the new birth, and

eagerly desire it.

The text tells you, that the word is the feed, whereof the new creature is formed: therefore take heed to it, and entertain it, for it is your life. Apply yourselves to the reading of the Scripture. You that cannot read, get others to read it to you. Wait diligently on the preaching of the word, as by divine appointment the special mean of conversion; for it pleaseth God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe, I Cor. i. 21. Wherefore cast not yourselves out of Christ's way; reject not the means of grace, lest you be found to judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, Attend carefully to the word preached. Hear every fermon, as if you were hearing for eternity: take heed that the fowls of the air pick not up the feed from you, as it is fown. Give thyself wholly to it, I Tim. iv. 15. Receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, 1 Thess. ii. 13. Hear it with application, looking on it as a meffage fent from heaven, to you in particular; though not to you only, Rev. iii, 22. He that bath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit faith unto the churches. Lay it up in your hearts; meditate upon it; and be not as the unclean beafts, that chew not the cud. But by earnest prayer beg that the dew of heaven may fall on thy heart, that the feed may fpring up there.

More particularly, (1.) Receive the testimony of the word of God, concerning the misery of an unregenerate state, the sinfulness thereof, and the absolute necessity of regeneration. (2.) Receive its testimony concerning God, what a holy and just one he is, (3.) Examine thy ways by it; namely, the thoughts of thy heart, the expressions of thy lips, and the tenor of thy life. Look back through the several periods of thy life, and see thy sins from the precepts of the word;

and learn, from its threatenings, what thou art liable to on the account of these sins. (4.) View the corruption of thy nature, by the help of the same word of God; as in a glass, which represents our ugly face in a lively manner. Were these things deeply rooted in the heart, they might be the seed of that sear and forrow, on account of thy soul's state, which are necessary to prepare and stir thee up to look after a Saviour. Fix your thoughts upon him offered to thee in the gospel, as sully suited to thy case; having, by his obedience to the death, perfectly satisfied the justice of God, and brought in everlasting righteousness. This may prove the seed of humiliation, desire, hope, and faith; and move thee to stretch out the withered hand unto him, at his own command.

Let these things sink deeply into your hearts, and improve them diligently. Remember, whatever you be, you must be born again; else it had been better for you that you had never been born. Wherefore, if any of you shall live and die in an unregenerate state, you will be inexcusable, having been fairly warned of your

danger.

H E A D II.

The MYSTICAL UNION between CHRIST and Believers.

JOHN XV. 5. I am the Vine, ye are the Branches.

Having spoken of the change made by regeneration, on all those who will inherit eternal life, in opposition to their natural real state, the state of degeneracy; I proceed to speak of the change made on them, in their union with the Lord Jesus Christ, in opposition to their natural relative state of misery. The doctrine of the saint's union with Christ, is very plainly and sully insisted on, from the beginning to the 12th verse of this chapter; which is a part of our

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Lord's farewell-fermon to his disciples. Sorrow had now filled their hearts: they were apt to say, Alas! what will become of us, when our Master is taken from our head? who will then instruct us? who will solve our doubts? how shall we be supported, under our difficulties and discouragements? how shall we be able to live, without our wonted communication with him? Therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ seasonably teaches them the mystery of their union with him, comparing himself to the vine, and them to the branches.

He compares, (1.) Himself to a vine. I am the vine. He had been celebrating, with his disciples, the sacrament of his supper, that sign and seal of his people's union with him; and had told them, That he would drink no more of the fruit of the vine, till he should drink it new with them in his Father's kingdom: and now he shews himself to be the vine, from whence the wine of their confolation should come. The vine hath less beauty than many other trees; but is exceeding fruitful; fitly representing the low condition which our Lord was then in, yet bringing many fons to glory. But that which is chiefly aimed at, in his comparing himself to a vine, is to represent himself as the supporter and nourisher of his people, in whom they live, and bring forth fruit. (2.) He compares them to branches; ye are the branches of that vine. Ye are the branches knit to, and growing on this stock, drawing all your life and sap from it. It is a beautiful comparison; as if he had said, I am as a vine, you are as the branches of that vine. Now there are two forts of branches; (1.) Natural branches, which at first spring out of the stock. These are the branches that are in the tree, and were never out of it. (2.) There are ingrafted branches, which are branches cut off from the tree that first gave them life, and put into another, to grow upon it. Thus branches come to be on a tree, which originally were not on it. branches mentioned in the text are of the latter fort; Branches broken off (as the word in the original language denotes), namely, from the tree that first gave them life. None of the children of men is a natural

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branch of the fecond Adam, viz. Jefus Chrift, the true vine; they are all the natural branches of the first Adam, that degenerate vine: but the elect are all of them, sooner or later, broken off from their natural stock, and

ingrafted into Christ, the true vine.

DOCTRINE. They who are in the state of grace, are ingrafted in, and united to, the Lord Jesus Christ. They are taken out of their natural stock, cut off from it; and are now ingrasted into Christ, as the new stock. In handling of this, I shall speak to the myssical union. (1.) More generally. (2.) More particularly.

A general View of the Mystical Union.

FIRST, In the general, for understanding the union between the Lord Jesus Christ and his elect, who be-

lieve in him, and on him.

1. It is a spiritual union. Man and wife, by their marriage union, become one flesh; Christ and true believers, by this union, become one spirit, 2 Cor. vi. 17. As one foul or spirit actuates both the head and the members in the natural body; fo the one Spirit of God dwells in Christ and the Christian; for, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he his mone of his, Rom. viii. 9. Corporal union is made by contact; fo the stones in a building are united: but this is an union of another nature. Were it possible that we could eat the flesh, and drink the blood of Christ, in a corporal and carnal manner; it would profit nothing, John vi. 63. It was not Mary's bearing him in her womb, but her believing on him, that made her a faint, Luke vii. 27, 28. A certain woman faid unto him, Bleffed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea, rather bleffed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

2. It is a real union. Such is our weakness in our present state, so much are we sunk in sin, that we are prone to form in our fancy an image of every thing proposed to us: and as to whatever is denied us, we are apt to suspect it to be but a siction, or what has no reality. But nothing is more real than what is spiritual;

as approaching nearest to the nature of him who is the fountain of all reality, namely, God himself. We do not see with our eyes the union between our own soul and body; neither can we represent it to ourselves truly, by imagination, as we do sensible things: yet the reality of it is not to be doubted. Faith is no fancy, but the substance of things hoped for, Heb. xi. Neither is the union thereby made between Christ and believers imaginary, but most real: for we are members of his body, of his steph, and of his bones, Eph. v. 30.

3. It is a most close and intimate union. Believers, regenerate persons, who siduciously credit him, and rely on him, have put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27. If that be not enough, he is in them, John xvii. 23. formed in them, as the child in the womb, Gal. iv. 19. He is the foundation, 1 Cor. iii. 11. they are the lively stones built upon him, 1 Pet. ii. 5. he is the Head, and they the body, Eph. i. 22, 23. nay, he liveth in them, as their very souls live in their bodies. Gal. ii. 34. And, what is more than all this, they are one in the Father and the Son, as the Father is in Christ, and Christ in the Father, John xvii. 21. That they all may be one, as show the Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.

4. Though it is not a mere legal union, yet it is an union supported by law. Christ, as the Surety, and Christians as the principal debtors, are one in the eye of the law. When the elect had run themselves with the rest of mankind, in debt to the justice of God, Christ became Surety for them, and paid the debt. When they believe on him, they are united to him in spiritual marriage union; which takes effect so far, that what he did and fuffered for them, is reckoned in law as if they had done and fuffered it themselves. Hence, they are faid to be crucified with Jesus, Gal. ii. 20. buried with him, Col. ii. 12. yea, raifed up together, (namely with Christ) and made to sit together in beavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 6. In which places, faints on earth, of whom the Apostle there ipeaks, cannot be faid to be fitting, but in the way of law reckoning.

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5. It is an indiffoluble union. Once in Christ, ever in him. Having taken up his habitation in the heart, he never removes. None can untie this happy knot. Who will dissolve this union? Will he himself? No, he will not; we have his word for it: I will not turn away from them, Jer. xxxii. 40. But perhaps the finner will do this mischief for himself; no, he shall not; They shall not depart from me, saith their God, ibid. Can devils do it? No, unless they be stronger than Christ, and his Father too; Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand, saith our Lord, John x. 28. And none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand, ver. 39. But what fay you of death, which parts husband and wife; yea, separates the soul from body? will not death do it? No; the Apostle, Rom. viii. 39. 59. is perfuaded that neither death, (as terrible as it is) nor life, (as desireable as it is) nor devils, those evil angels, nor the devil's perfecuting agents, though they be principalities or powers on earth; nor evil things present, already lying on us, nor evil things to come on us; nor the height of worldly felicity; nor the depth of worldly mifery; nor any other creature, good or evil, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. As death separated Christ's foul from his body, but could not separate either his foul or body from his divine nature: fo, though the saints should be separated from their nearest relations in the world, and from all their earthly enjoyments; yea, though their fouls should be separated from their bodies, and their bodies separate in a thousand pieces, their bones scattered, as when one cutteth or cleaveth wood: yet foul and body, and every piece of the body, the smallest dust of it, shall remain united to the Lord Christ: for even in death, they sleep in fesus, 1 Thess. iv. 14. He keepeth all their bones, Psal. xxxiv. 20. Union with Christ is the grace wherein we stand, firm and stable, as mount Zion, which cannot be removed.

Lastly, It is a mysterious union. The gospel is a doctrine of mysteries. It discovers to us the substantial union of the three persons in one God-head, 1 John v. 7. These three are one: the hypostatical union, of

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Lord Jelus Chrift, i I im. in. 16. God was manifest in the fless: and the mystical union, between Christ and believers; this is a great mystery also, Eph. v. 32. O what mysteries are here! the head in heaven, the members on earth, yet really united! Christ in the believer, living in him, walking in him; and the believer dwelling in God, putting on the Lord Jesus, eating his sless, and drinking his blood! This makes the faints a mystery to the world; yea, a mystery to

SECONDLY, We come now more particularly to speak of the union with, and ingrafting into Jesus Christ. (1.) I shall consider the natural stock, which the branches are taken out of. (2.) The supernatural stock they are ingrasted into. (3.) What branches are cut off the old stock, and put into the new. (4.) How it is done. And, lastly, The benefits slowing from this union and ingrasting.

themselves.

Of the Natural and Supernatural Stocks, and the Branches taken out of the former, and ingrafted into the latter.

I. Let us take a view of the stock, which the branches are taken out of. The two Adams, that is, Adam and Christ, are the two stocks: for the Scripture speaks of these two, as if there had been no more men in the world than they, I Cor. xv. 45. The first man Adam was made a living foul, the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit, ver. 47. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from beaven. And the reason is, there were never any that were not branches of one of these two; all men being either in the one stock or in the other; for in these two forts all mankind stand divided, ver. 48. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, fuch are they also that are heavenly. The first Adam, then is the natural stock: on this flock are the branches found growing at first; which are afterwards cut off, and ingrafted into Christ. for the fallen angels, as they had no relation to the first Adam, to they have none to the fecond.

There are four things to be remembered here. (1.) That all mankind (the man Christ excepted) are

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First, What a stock he was originally. He was a vine of the Lord's planting, a choice vine, a noble vine, wholly good. There was a consultation of the Trinity, at the planting of this vine, Gen i. 26. Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness. There was no rottenness at the heart of it. There was sap and juice enough in it, to have nourished all the branches, to bring forth fruit unto God. My meaning is, Adam

was made able perfectly to keep the commandments of God, which would have procured eternal life to himself, and to all his posterity: for as all die by Adams disobedience; all would have had life by his obedience, if he had stood. Consider,

Secondly, What that stock now is: ah! most unlike to what it was, when planted by the author and sountain of all good. A blast from hell, and a bite with the venomous teeth of the old serpent, have made it a degenerate stock, a dead stock; nay, a killing stock.

First, It is a degenerate naughty stock. Therefore the Lord God faid to Adam, in that difmal day, Where art thou? Gen. iii. 9. In what condition art thou now? How art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a ftrange vine, unto me? Or, where wast thou? Why not in the place of meeting with me? Why fo long in coming? What meaneth this fearful change; this hiding of thyself from me? Alas! the stock is degenerate, quite spoiled, is become altogether naught, and brings forth wild grapes. Converse with the devil is preferred to communion with God. Satan is believed; and God, who is truth itself, disbelieved. He who was the friend of God, is now in conspiracy against him. Darkness is come in the room of light: ignorance prevails in the mind, where divine knowledge shone; the will, which was righteous and regular, is now turned rebel against its Lord: and the whole man is in dreadful disorder.

Before I go further, let me stop and observe, Here is a mirror both for saints and sinners. Sinners, stand here and consider what you are: and saints, learn you what once you were. You, sinners, are branches of a degenerate stock. Fruit you may bear indeed; but now your vine is the vine of Sodom, your grapes must of course be grapes of gall, Deut. xxxii. 35. The Scripture speaks of two sorts of fruit, which grow on the branches of the natural stock; and it is plain that they are of the nature of their degenerate stock; (1.) The wild grapes of wickedness, Isa. v. 2. These grow in abundance, by influence from hell. See Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. At its gates are all manner of these

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fruits, both new and old. Storms come from heaven to check them; but they still grow. They are struck at with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God; confcience gives them many a secret blow: yet they thrive.

(2.) Fruit to themselves, Hos. x. 1. What else are all the unrenewed man's acts of obedience, his reformation, sober deportment, his prayers, and good works? They are all done chiefly for himself, not for the glory of God. These fruits are like the apples of Sodom, sair to look at, but fall to ashes when handled and tried. You think you have not only the leaves of a profession, but the fruits of a holy practice too; but if you be not broken off from the old stock, and ingrafted in Christ Jesus, God accepts not, nor regards

your fruits.

Here I must take occasion to tell you, that there are five faults which will be found in heaven with your best fruits; (1.) Their bitterness; your clusters are bitter, Deut. xxxii. 32. There is a spirit of bitterness, wherewith some come before the Lord, in religious duties, living in malice and envy; and which some professors entertain against others, because they out-shine them in holiness of life, or because they are not of their opinion. This, wherever it reigns, is a fearful sypmtom of an unregenerate state. But I do not so much meanthis, as that which is common to all the branches of the old flock, namely, the leaven of hypocrify, Luke xii. 1. which fowers and imbitters every duty they perform. The wisdom, that is full of good fruits, is without hypocrify, James iii. 17. (2.) Their ill favour. Their works are abominable, for themselves are corrupt, Psal. xiv. 1. They all savour of the old stock, not of the new. It is the peculiar privilege of the saints, that they are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, 2 Cor. ii. 15. The unregenerate man's fruits favour not of love to Christ, nor of the blood of Christ, nor of the incense of his intercession, and therefore will never be accepted in heaven. (3.) Their unripeness. Their grape is an unripe grape, Job xv. 33. There is no influence on them from the Sun of Righteoufness, to bring them to perfection. They have the shape of

222 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III fruit, but no more. The matter of duty is in them, but they want right principles and ends: their works are not wrought in God, John ii. 21. Their prayers drop from their lips, before their hearts be impregnated with the vital sap of the Spirit of supplication: their tears fall from their eyes, ere their hearts be truly foftened: their feet turn to new paths, and their way is altered, while yet their nature is not changed. (4.) Their lightness; being weighed in the balances, they are found wanting, Dan. v. 27. For evidence whereof you may observe, that they do not humble the foul, but lift it up in pride. The good fruits of holiness bear down the branches they grow upon, making them to falute the ground, I Cor xv. 10. I laboured more abundantly than they all: vet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. But the blafted fruits of unrenewed men's performances hang lightly, on branches towering up to heaven, Judges xvii. 13. Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my prieft. They look indeed too high for God to behold them; Wherefore have I fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Isa. lviii. 3. The more duties they do, and the better they feem to perform them, the less are they humbled, and the more are they lifted up. This difposition of the sinner, is the exact reverse of what is to be found in the faint. To men, who neither are in Christ, nor are solicitous to be found in him, their duties are like windy bladders, wherewith they think to fwim ashore to Immanuel's land: but these must needs break, and they confequently fink; because they take not Christ for the lifter up of their head, Psal. iii. 3. Laftly, They are not all manner of pleasant fruits, Cant. vii. 13. Christ, as a King, must be served with variety. Where God makes the heart his garden, he plants it as Solomon did his, with trees of all kinds of fruits, Ecclef. ii. 5. Accordingly it brings forth the fruits of the Spirit in all goodness, Eph. v. 9. But the ungodly are not fo; their obedience is never universal; there is always fome one thing or other excepted. In one word, their fruits are fruits of an ill tree, that cannot be accepted in heaven.

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Secondly, Our natural stock is a dead stock, according to the threatening, Gen. ii. 17. In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Our root now is rottenness, no marvel the blossom go up as dust. The stroke has gone to the heart, the sap is let out, and the tree is withered. The curse of the first covenant, like a hot thunder-bolt from heaven, has lighted on it, and ruined it. It is cursed now as that sig-tree, Matth. xxi. 19. Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. Now it is good for nothing, but to cumber the ground, and

furnish fuel for Tophet.

Let me enlarge a little here also. Every unrenewed man is a branch of a dead stock. When thou seest, O finner, a dead stock of a tree, exhausted of all its fap, having branches on it in the same condition, look on it as a lively representation of thy soul's state. (1.) Where the stock is dead, the branches must needs be barren. Alas! the barrenness of many professors plainly discovers on what stock they are growing. It is easy to pretend to faith, but shew me thy faith without thy works, if thou canst, James ii. 18. (2.) A dead flock can convey no fap to the branches, to make them bring forth fruit. The covenant of works was the bond of our union with the natural flock; but now, it is become weak through the flesh; that is, through the degeneracy and depravity of human nature, Rom. viii. 13. It is strong enough to command, and to bind heavy burdens on the shoulders of those who are not in Christ, but it affords no strength to bear them. The sap, that was once in the root, is now gone: the law like a merciless creditor, apprehends Adam's heirs, saying to each, Par me what thou owest; when, alas! his effects are riotoufly spent. (3.) All pains and cost are lost on the tree, whose life is gone. In vain do men labour to get fruit on the branches, when there is no fap in the root. First, The gardeners pains are lost: ministers lose their labour on the branches of the old stock, while they continue on it. Many fermons are preached to no purpose, because there is no life to give fensation. Sleeping men may be awakened; but the dead cannot be raifed without a miracle: even fo, the

224 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. dead finner must remain so, if he be not restored to life by a miracle of grace. Secondly, The influences of heaven are lost on such a tree: in vain doth the rain fall upon it: in vain is it laid open to the winter-cold and frosts. The Lord of the vineyard digs about many a dead foul, but it is not bettered. Bruise the fool in a mortar, his folly will not depart. Though he meets with many crosses, yet he retains his lusts: let him be laid on a fick-bed, he will lay there like a fick beaft, groaning under his pain, but not mourning for, nor turning from his fin. Let death itself stare him in the face, he will prefumptuously maintain his hope, as if he would look the grim mcffenger out of countenance. Sometimes he is under legal convictions, and is fent home with a trembling heart: but at length he prevails against these things, and turns as secure as ever. Thirdly, Summer and winter are alike to the branches on the dead flock. When others about them are budding, bloffoming, and bringing forth fruit, there is no change on them: the dead stock has no growing time at all. Perhaps it may be difficult to know, in the winter, what trees are dead, and what are alive; but the fpring plainly discovers it. There are some seasons wherein there is little life to be perceived, even amongst saints; yet times of reviving come at length. But even when the vine flourisheth, and the pomegranates bud forth, (when faving grace is discovering itself by its lively actings, wherever it is) the branches on the old flock are still withered. When the dry bones are coming together, bone to bone amongst faints, the sinner's bones are still lying about the grave's mouth. They are trees that cumber the ground, ready to be cut. down; and will be cut down for the fire, if God in mercy prevent it not, by cutting them off from that flock, and ingrafting them into another.

Lastly, Our natural stock is a killing stock. If the stock die, how can the branches live? If the sap be gone from the root and heart, the branches must needs wither. In Adam all die, 1 Cor. xv. 22. The root died in paradise, and all the branches in it, and with it. The root is poisoned, and from thence the branches

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 225 are infected; Death is in the pot; and all that taste of

the pulse, or pottage, are killed.

. Know, then, that every natural man is a branch of a killing stock. Our natural root not only gives us no life, but it has a killing power, reaching to all the branches thereof. There are four things which the first Adam conveys to all his branches, and threy are abiding in, and lying on fuch of them as are not ingrafted in Christ. First, A corrupt nature. He sinned, and his nature was thereby corrupted and depraved; and this corruption is conveyed to all his posterity. He was infected, and the contagion spread itself over all his feed. Secondly, Guilt, that is, an obligation to punishment, Rom. v. 21. By one man fin entered into the world, and death by fin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. The threatenings of the law, as cords of death, are twifted about the branches of the old stock, to draw them over the hedge into the fire. And till they be cut off from this stock, by the pruning knife, the fword of vengeance hangs over their heads, to cut them down. Thirdly, This killing stock transmits the curse into the branches. The stock, as the stock (for I speak not of Adam, in his personal and private capacity) being curfed, fo are the branches, Gal. iii. 10. For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse. This curse affects the whole man, and all that belongs to him, every thing he possesses, and works three ways; (1.) As poison, infecting; thus their bleffings are cursed, Mal. ii. 2. Whatever the man enjoys, it can do him no good, but evil, being thus poisoned by the curse. His prosperity in the world destroys him, Prov. i. 22. The ministry of the gospel is a savour of death unto death to him, 2 Cor. ii. 16. His feeming attainments in religion are curled to him: his knowledge ferves but to puff him up, and his duties to keep him back from Christ. (2.) It worketh as a moth, confuming and wasting by little and little, Hos. v. 12. Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth. There is a worin at the root, confuming them by degrees. Thus the curse pursued Saul, till it wormed him out of all his enjoyments, and out of the

226 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III, very shew he had of religion. Sometimes they decay like the fat of lambs, and melt away as the fnow in a sun-shine. (3.) It acteth as a lion rampant, Hos. v. 14. I will be unto Ephraim as a lion. The Lord rains on them snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, in such a manner, that they are hurried away with the stream. He teareth their enjoyments from them in his wrath, pursueth them with terrors, rends their fouls from their bodies, and throws the dead branch into the fire. Thus the curse devours like fire, which none can quench. Lastly, This killing stock transmits death to the branches upon it. Adam took the poifonous cup, and drunk it off: this occasioned death to himfelf and us. We came into the world spiritually dead, and thereby obnoxious to eternal death, and absolutely liable to temporal death. This root is to us like the Scythian river, which, they fay, brings forth little bladders every day, out of which come certain small flies, which are bred in the morning, winged at noon, and dead at night: a very lively emblem of our mortal state.

Now, firs, is it not absolutely necessary to be broken off from this our natural flock? what will our fair leaves of a profession, or our fruits of duties avail, if we be still branches of the degenerate, dead, and killing flock? But, alas! of the many questions among us, few are taken up about these, Am I broken off from the old stock, or not? Am I ingrafted in Christ, or not? Ah! wherefore all this waste of time? Why is there so much noise about religion amongst many, who can give no good account of their having laid a good foundation, being mere strangers to experimental religion? I fear, if God does not in mercy undermine the religion of many of us, and let us fee that we have none at all, our fruit will be found rottenness, and our bloffom go up as duft, in a dying hour. Therefore let us look to our flate, that we be not found fools in

our latter end.

II. Let us now view the supernatural stock, in which the branches, cut off from the natural stock, are ingrasted. Jesus Christ is sometimes called the *Branch*, Zech. iii. 8. So he is in respect of his human nature,

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 227 being a branch, and the top-branch of the house of David. Sometimes he is called a Root, Isa. xi. 10. we have both together, Rev. xxii. 16. I am the root, and the offspring of David; David's root as God, and his offspring as man. The text tells us, that he is the vine," i.e. he, as Mediator, is the vine-stock, whereof believers are the branches. As the fap comes from the earth into the root and flock, and from thence is diffused into the branches; so by Christ, as Mediator, divine life is conveyed from the fountain, unto those who are united to him by faith, John vi. 57. As the living Father bath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. By Christ as Mediator, not as God only, as some have afferted; nor yet as man only, as the Papists generally hold: but as Mediator, God and man, Acts xx. 28. The church of God, which he hath purchased with his blood. Heb. ix. 14. Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God. The divine and human natures have their distinct actings, yet a joint operation, in his discharging the office of Mediator. This is illustrated by the fimilitude of a fiery fword, which at once cuts and burns: cutting it burneth, and burning it cutteth; the steel cuts, and the fire burns. Where-fore Christ, God-man, is the stock, whereof believers are the branches: and they are united to whole Christ. They are united to him in his human nature, as being members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, Eph. v. 30. And they are united to him in his divine nature; for so the apostle speaks of this union, Col. i. 27. Christ in you the hope of glory. Those who are Christ's have the Spirit of Christ, Rom. viii. 9. and by him they are united to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost, I John iv. 15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. Faith, the bond of this union, receives whole Christ, Godman, and fo unites us to him as fuch.

Behold here, O believers, your high privilege. You were once branches of a degenerate flock, even as others: but you are, by grace, become branches of the true vine, John xv. 1. You are cut out of a dead and

killing stock; and ingrafted in the last Adam, who was made a quickening Spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45. Your loss by the first Adam is made up, with great advantage, by your union with the second. Adam, at his best estate, was but a shrub, in comparison with Christ the tree of life. He was but a servant, Christ is the Son, the Heir, and Lord of all things; the Lord from heaven. It cannot be denied, that grace was shewn in the first covenant: but it is as far exceeded, by the grace of the second covenant, as the twilight is by the light of the mid-day.

III. What branches are taken out of the natural flock, and grafted into this vine? Answ. These are the elect, and none other. They, and they only, are grafted into Christ; and consequently none but they are cut off from the killing stock. For them alone he interceeds, That they may be one in him and his Father, John xvii. 9. 23. Faith, the bond of this union, is given to none else: it is the faith of God's elect, Titus i. 1. The Lord paffeth by many branches growing on the natural stock, and cuts off only here one, and there one, and grafts them into the true vine, according as free love hath determined. Oft does he pitch upon the most unlikely branch, leaving the top-boughs; passing by the mighty, and the noble, and calling the weak, base, and despised, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. Yea, he often leaves the fair and finooth, and takes the rugged and knotty, and fuch were some of you, but ye are washed, &c. 1 Cor. vi. 11. If we enquire why fo? We find no other reason, but because they were chosen in him, Eph. i. 4. Predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, verse 5. Thus are they gathered together in Chrift, while the rest are left growing on their natural stock, to be afterwards bound up in bundles for the fire. Therefore, to whoever the gospel may come in vain, it will have a bleffed effect on God's elect, Acts xiii. 48. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Where the Lord has much people, the gospel will have much fuccess, sooner or later. Such as are to be saved, will be added to the mystical body of Christ.

How the Branches are taken out of the Natural Stock, and ingrafted into the Supernatural Stock.

IV. I am to shew how the branches are cut off from the natural flock, the first Adam, and grafted into the true vine, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks to the husbandman, not to the branch, that it is cut off from its natural stock, and grafted into a new one. The finner, in his coming off from the first stock, is passive, and neither can nor will come off from it of his own accord, but clings to it, till almighty power makes him fall off, John vi. 44. No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath fent me draw him. And chap. v. 40. Ye will' not come to me, that ye might have life. The ingrafted branches are God's busbandry, 1 Cor. iii. 9. The planting of the Lord, Ifa. lxi. 3. The ordinary means which he makes use of, in this work, is the ministry of the word, I Cor. iii. 9. We are labourers together with God; but the efficacy thereof is wholly from him. Whatever the minister's parts or piety be, ver. 7. Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. The apostles preached to the Jews, yet the body of that people remained in infidelity, Rom. x. 16. Who hath believed our report? Yea, Christ himfelf, who spoke as never man spake, saith concerning the fuccess of his own ministry, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, Isa. xlix. 4. The branches may be hacked by the preaching of the word; but the stroke will never go through, till it be carried home by the omnipotent arm. However, God's ordinary way is, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, 1 Cor. i. 21.

The cutting off the branch from the natural stock, is performed by the pruning knife of the law, in the hand of the Spirit of God, Gal. ii. 19. For I through the law am dead to the law. It is by the bond of the covenant of works, as I said before, that we are knit to our natural stock: therefore, as a wife, unwilling to be put away, pleads and hangs by the marriage-tie; fo do men by the covenant of works. They hold by it, like the man who held the ship with his hands; and when

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one hand was cut off, held it with the other; and when both were cut off, held with his teeth. This will appear from a distinct view of the Lord's work on men, in bringing them off from the old stock; which now

I offer in the following particulars.

First, When the Spirit of the Lord comes to deal with a person, to bring him to Christ, he finds him in Laodicea's case, in a sound sleep of security, dreaming of heaven, and the favour of God, though full of fin against the holy One of Israel, Rev. iii. 17. Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and vaked. Therefore he darts in some beams of light into the dark foul; and lets the man fee that he is a lost man, if he turn not over a new leaf, and betake himself to a new course of life. Thus, by the Spirit of the Lord acting as a Spirit of bondage, there is a criminal court erected in the man's breast; where he is arraigned, accused, and condemned, for breaking the law of God, convinced of fin and judgment, John xvi. 8. And now he can no longer fleep fecurely in his former course of life. This is the first stroke which the

branch gets, in order to cutting off.

Secondly, Hereupon the man forfakes his former profane courses, his lying, swearing, sabbath-breaking, stealing, and such like practices; though they be dear to him as right eyes, he will rather quit them than ruin his foul. The ship is like to fink, and therefore he throweth his goods overboard, that he himself may not perish. Now he begins to bless himself in his heart, and look joyfully on his evidences for heaven; thinking himself a better servant to God than many others, Luke xviii. 11. God, 1 thank thee, I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, &c. But he soon gets another stroke with the ax of the law, shewing him that it is only he who doth what is written in the law, that can be faved by it, and that his negative holiness is too scanty a covering from the storm of God's wrath. Thus, although his fins of commission only were heavy on him before, his fins of omission now crowd into his thoughts, attended with a train of law-curses and vengeance. And each of the ten commands discharges

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 231 thunder-claps of wrath against him, for his omitting

required duties.

Thirdly, Upon this he turns to a politively holy course of life. He not only is not profane, but he performs religious duties: he prays, feeks the knowledge of the principles of religion, strictly observes the Lord's day, and, like Herod, does many things, and hears fermons gladly. In one word, there is a great conformity, in his outward conversation, to the letter of both tables of the law. There is a mighty change upon the man, which his neighbours cannot miss taking notice of. Hence he is chearfully admitted by the godly into their fociety, as a praying person; and can confer with them about religious matters, yea, and about soul-exercife, which some are not acquainted with; and their good opinion of him confirms his good opinion of himself. This step in religion is fatal to many, who never get beyond it. But here the Lord gives the elect branch a further stroke. Conscience slies in the man's face, for some wrong steps in his conversation, the neglect of some duty, or commission of some sin, which is a blot in his conversation: and then the slaming fword of the law appears again over his head; and the curse rings in his ears; for not continuing in all things written in the law, to do them, Gal. iii. 10.

Fourthly, On this account he is obliged to feek another falve for his fore. He goes to God, confesseth his fin, seeks the pardon of it, promising to watch against it for the time to come; and so finds ease, and thinks he may very well take it, seeing the Scripture saith, If we confess our fins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our fins, I John i. 9. not considering that he grasps at a privilege, which is theirs only who are grasted into Christ, and under the covenant of grace, and which the branches yet growing on the old stock cannot plead. And here sometimes there are formal and express vows made against such and such sins, and binding to such and such duties. Thus many go on all their days, knowing no other religion than to perform duties, and confess and pray for pardon of that wherein they fail, promising themselves eternal happiness, though they are ut-

232 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. ter strangers to Christ. Here many elect ones have been cast down wounded, and many reprobates have been flain, while the wounds of neither of them have been deep enough to cut them off from their natural stock. But the Spirit of the Lord gives yet a deeper stroke to the branch which is to be cut off, shewing him, that as yet he is but an out-fide faint, and difcovering to him the filthy lustslodged in his heart, which he took no notice of before, Rom. vii. 9. When the commandment came, fin revived, and I died. Then he fees his heart a dunghill of hellish lusts, filled with covetousness, pride, malice filthiness, and the like. Now, as foon as the door of the chambers of his imagery is thus opened to him, and he fees what they do there in the dark, his out-fide religion is blown up as infufficient; and he learns a new lesson in religion, namely, That he is not a few which is one outwardly, Rom. ii. 28.

Fifthly, Upon this he goes further, even to infide religion; fets to work more vigorously than ever, mourns over the cvils of his heart, and strives to bear down the weeds which he finds growing in that neglected garden. He labours to curb his pride and passion, and to banish speculative impurities; prays more fervently, hears attentively, and strives to get his heart affected in every religious duty he performs: thus he comes to think himself not only an out-side, but an in-side Christian. Wonder not at this, for there is nothing in it beyond the power of nature, or what one may attain to under a vigorous influence of the covenant of works; therefore another yet deeper stroke is given. The law chargeth home on the man's conscience, that he was a transgressor from the womb; that he came into the world a guilty creature; and that in the time of his ignorance, and even fince his eyes were opened, he has been guilty of many actual fins, either altogether overlooked by him, or not fufficiently mourned over (for spiritual fores, not healed by the blood of Christ, but skinned over fome other way, are eafily irritated, and foon break out again); therefore the law takes him by the throat, faying, Pay what thou oweft.

Sixthly, Then the finner fays in his heart, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all; and so falls to

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work to pacify an offended God, and to atone for those fins. He renews his repentance, such as it is; bears patiently the afflictions laid upon him; yea, he afflicts himfelf, denies himself the use of his lawful comforts, sighs deeply, mourns bitterly, cries with tears for a pardon, till he hath wrought up his heart to a conceit of having obtained it, as he has thus done penance for what is past, and resolves to be a good servant to God, and to hold on in outward and inward obedience for the time to come. But the stroke must go nearer the heart yet, ere the branch fall off. The Lord discovers to him, in the glass of the law, how he sinneth in all he does, even when he does the best he can; and therefore the dreadful found returns to his ears, Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, &c. When ye fasted and mourned, faith the Lord, did you at all fast unto me, even to me? Will muddy water make clean cloaths? Will you fatisfy for one fin with another? Did not your thoughts wander in fuch a duty? Were not your affections flat in another? Did not your heart give a whorish look to such an idol? And did it not rise in a fit of impatience, under such an affliction? Should I accept this of your hands? Curfed be the deceiver, which facrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing, Mal. i. 13, 14. And thus he becomes so far broke off, that he sees he is able to satisfy the demands of the law.

Seventhly, Hence, like a broken man, who finds that he is not able to pay all his debt, he goes about to compound with his creditor. And, being in pursuit of ease and comfort, he does what he can to fulfil the law; and wherein he fails, he looks that God will accept the will for the deed. Thus doing his duty, and having a will to be better, he cheats himself into a persuasion of the goodness of his state: and hereby thousands are ruined. But the elect get another stroke, which looseth their hold in this case. The doctrine of the law is borne in on their consciences, demonstrating to them, that exact and perfect obedience is required by it, under pain of the curse; and that it is doing, and not wishing to do, which will avail. Wishing to do better will not anfiver the law's demands; and therefore the curse founds

234 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State II. again, Curfed is every one that continueth not—to do them;

that is, actually to do them. In vain is wishing then. Eighthly, Being broken off from all hopes of compounding with the law, he falls a borrowing. He fees that all he can do to obey the law, and all his defires to be and to do better, will not fave his foul: therefore he goes to Christ, intreating that his righteousness may make up what is wanting in his own, and cover all the defects of his doings and fufferings, that fo God, for Christ's sake, may accept them, and thereupon be reconciled. Thus doing what he can to fulfil the law, and looking to Christ to make up all his defects, he comes at length again to fleep in a found skin. Many persons are ruined this way. This was the error of the Galatians, which Paul, in his epistle to them, disputes against. But the Spirit of God breaks off the finner from this hold also; by bringing home to his conscience that great truth, Gal. iii. 12. The law is not of faith, but the man that doth them shall live in them. There is no mixing of the law and faith in this business: the finner must hold by one of them, and let the other go. The way of the law, and the way of faith, are so far different, that it is not possible for a sinner to walk in the one, without coming off from the other: and if he be for doing, he must do all alone; Christ will not do a part for him, if he doth not all. A garment pieced up of fundry forts of righteousness, is not a garment meet for the court of heaven. Thus the man is like one in a dream, who thought he was eating, but being awakened by a stroke, behold his foul is faint: his heart finks in him like a stone, while he finds that he can neither bear his burden himself alone, nor can he get help under it.

Ninthly, What can he do, who must needs pay, and yet has not enough of his own to bring him out of debt, nor can borrow so much, and to beg he is ashamed? What can such a one do, I say, but sell himself, as the man under the law, that was waxen poor? Lev. xxv. 47. Therefore the sinner, beat off from so many holds, attempts to make a bargain with Christ, and to sell himself to the Son of God, (if I may so

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 235 fpeak) folemnly promifing and vowing, that he will be a fervant to Christ, as long as he lives, if he will fave his foul. And here, oft-times, the finner makes a personal covenant with Christ, resigning himself to him on these terms; yea, and takes the facrament to make the bargain fure. Hereupon the man's great care is, how to obey Christ, keep his commands, and so fulfil his bargain. In this the foul finds a false unfound peace for a while; till the Spirit of the Lord gives another stroke, to cut off the man from this refuge of lies likewife. And that happens in this manner. When he fails of the duties he engaged to perform, and falls again into the fin he covenanted against; it is powerfully carried home on his conscience, that his covenant is broken: fo all his comfort goes, and terrors afresh feize on his foul, as one that has broken covenant with Christ. Commonly the man, to help himself, renews his covenant, but breaks it again as before. And how is it possible it should be otherwise, seeing he is still upon the old flock? Thus the work of many, all their days, as to their fouls, is nothing but a making and breaking fuch covenants, over and over again.

Object. Some perhaps will fay, Who liveth and finneth not? Who is there that faileth not of the duties he has engaged to? If you reject this way as unfound, who then can be faved? Anfw. True believers will be faved; namely, all who do by faith take hold of God's covenant. But this kind of covenant is men's own covenant, devised of their own heart; not God's covenant, revealed in the gospel of his grace: and the making of it is nothing else but the making of a covenant of works with Christ, confounding the law and the gospel; a covenant he will never subscribe to, though we should fign it with our heart's blood, Rom. iv. 14. 16. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. Chap. xi. 6. And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwife grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work. God's covenant is everlasting;

236 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. once in, never out of it again; and the mercies of it are fure mercies, Isa. lv. 3. But that covenant of yours is a tottering covenant, never fure, but broken every day. It is a mere servile covenant, giving Christ service for falvation: but God's covenant is a filial covenant, in which the finner takes Christ and his falvation freely offered, and so becomes a son, John i. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God: and being become a fon, he ferves his Father, not that the inheritance may become his, but because it is his, through Jesus Christ. See Gal. iv. 24. and downward. To enter into that spurious covenant, is to buy from Christ with money; but to take hold of God's covenant, is to buy of him without money and without price, Isa. lv. 1. that is to say, to beg of him. In that covenant men work for life; in God's covenant they come to Christ for life, and work from life. When a person under that covenant fails in his duty, all is gone; the covenant must be made over again. But under God's covenant, although the man fail in his duty, and for his failure falls under the discipline of the covenant, and lies under the weight of it, till fuch time as he has recourse a-new to the blood of Christ for pardon, and renew his repentance; yet all that he trusted to, for life and falvation, namely, the righteoufness of Christ, still stands intire, and the covenant remains firm. See Rom. vii. 24, 25. and viii. 1.

Now, though fome men spend their lives in making and breaking such covenants of their own, the terror upon the breaking of them wearing weaker and weaker by degrees, till at last it creates them little or no uneasiness; yet the man, in whom the good work is carried on, till it be accomplished in cutting him off from the old stock, finds these covenants to be as rotten cords, broke at every touch; and the terror of God being thereupon redoubled on his spirit, and the waters at every turn getting in unto his very soul, he is obliged to cease from catching hold of such covenants, and to

feek help fome other way.

Tenthly, Therefore the man comes at length to beg at Christ's door for mercy: but yet he is a proud beg-

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 237 gar, standing on his personal worth. For, as the Papifts have mediators to plead for them with the only Mediator, fo the branches of the old stock have always fomething to produce, which they think may commend them to Christ, and engage him to take their cause in hand. They cannot think of coming to the fpiritual market without money in their hand. They are like persons who have once had an estate of their own, but are reduced to extream poverty, and forced to beg. When they come to beg, they still remember their former character; and though they have lost their fubstance, yet they retain much of their former spirit: therefore they cannot think they ought to be treated as ordinary beggars, but deferve a particular regard, and, if that be not given them, their spirits rise against him to whom they address themselves for supply. Thus God gives the unhumbled finner many common mercies, and shuts him not up into the pit according to his deferving: but all this is nothing in his eyes. He must be fet down at the children's table, otherwise he reckons himself hardly dealt with and wronged: for he is not yet brought so low, as to think God may be justified when he speaketh (against him), and clear from all iniquity, when he judgeth him according to his real demerit, Psal. li. 4. He thinks, perhaps, that, even before he was enlightened, he was better than many others: he confiders his reformation of life, his repentance, the grief and tears which his fin has cost him, his earnest defires after Christ, his prayers and wrestlings for mercy; and useth all these now as bribes for mercy, laying no small weight upon them in his addresses to the throne of grace. But here the Spirit of the Lord shoots a sheaf of arrows into the man's heart, whereby his confidence in these things is sunk and destroyed; and, instead of thinking himself better than many, he is made to see himself worse than any. The naughtiness of his reformation of life is discovered; his repentance appears to him no better than the repentance of Judas; his tears like Esau's, and his desires after Christ to be felfish and loathsome, like those who sought Christ because of the loaves, John vi. 26. His an238 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III.

fwer from God feems now to be, Away proud beggar; how shall I put thee among the children? He feems to look sternly on him for his slighting of Jesus Christ by unbelief, which is a fin he scarce discerned before. But now, at length, he beholds it in its crimson colours, and is pierced to the heart, as with a thousand darts, while he sees how he has been going on blindly, sinning against the remedy of sin, and int he whole course of his life trampling on the blood of the Son of God. And now he is, in his own eyes, the miserable object of law-vengeance, yea, and gospel-vengeance too.

Eleventhly, The man being thus far humbled, will no more plead he is worthy for whom Christ should do this thing; but, on the contrary, looks on himself as unworthy of Christ, and unworthy of the favour of God. We may compare him, in this case, to the young man who followed Christ, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; who when the young men laid hold, left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked, Mark xiv. 51, 52. Even so the man had been following Christ in the thin and cold garment of his personal worthiness; but by it, even by it, which he so much trusted to, the law catched hold of him, to make him prisoner; and then he is fain to leave it, and flees away naked: yet not to Chrift, but from him. If you now tell him he is welcome to Christ, if he will come to him; he is apt to fay, Can fuch a vile and unworthy wretch as I be welcome to the holy Jefus? If a plaster be applied to his wounded foul, it will not stick. He says, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord, Luke v. 8. No man needs speak to him of his repentance for his comfort; he can quickly espy such faults in it as makes it naught: nor of his tears; for he is affured they have never come into the Lord's bottle. He disputes himself away from Christ; and concludes, now that he has been such a flighter of Christ, and is such an unholy and vile creature, that he cannot, he will not, he ought not to come to Christ; and that he must either be in better case, or else he will never believe. Hence he now makes his ftrongest efforts to amend what was amiss in his way before: he prays more earnestly than ever, mourns more

bitterly, strives against sin, in heart and life, more vigoroufly, and watcheth more diligently, if by any means he may at length be fit to come to Christ. One would think the man is well humbled now: but ah! devellish pride lurks under the veil of all this feeming humility; like a kindly branch of the old stock, he adheres still, and will not submit to the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3. He will not come to the market of free grace without money. He is bidden to the marriage of the King's Son, where the bridegroom himself furnisheth all the guests with wedding-garments, stripping them of their own: but he will not come, because he wants a wedding-garment: howbeit he is very busy in making one ready. This is fad work; and therefore he must have a deeper stroke yet, else he is ruined. This stroke is given him with the ax of the law, in its irritating power. Thus the law, girding the foul with cords of death, and holding it in with the rigorous commands of obedience, under the pain of the curse; and God, in his holy and wife conduct, with-drawing his reftraining grace, corruption is irritated, lusts become violent; and the more they are striven against, the more they rage, like a furious horse checked with the bit. Then corruptions fet up their heads, which he never faw in himself before. Here oft-times atheism, blasphemy, and, in one word, horrible things concerning God, terrible thoughts concerning the faith, arise in his breast; so that his heart is a very hell within him. Thus, while he is sweeping the house of his heart, not yet watered with gospel grace, those corruptions which lay quiet before, in neglected corners, fly up and down in it like dust. He is as one who is mending a dam, and while he is repairing breaches in it, and strengthening every part of it, a mighty flood comes down, overturns his works, and drives all away before it, as well what was newly laid, as what was laid before. Read Rom. vii. 8, 9, 10. 13. This is a stroke which goes to the heart: and by it his hope, of getting himself more fit to come to Christ, is cut off.

Lastly, Now the time is come, when the man, between hope and despair, resolves to go to Christ as he

240 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. is; and therefore, like a dying man, stretching himself just before his breath goes out, he rallies the broken forces of his foul, tries to believe, and in some fort lays hold on Jesus Christ. And now the branch hangs on the old flock by one fingle tack of a natural faith, produced by the natural vigour of one's own spirit, under a most pressing necessity, Psal. lxxviii. 34, 35. When he flow them, then they fought him, and they returned and enquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Hof. viii. 1. Ifrael shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee. But the Lord, minding to perfect his work, fetches yet another stroke, whereby the branch falls quite off. The Spirit of God convincingly discovers to the sinner his utter inability to do any thing that is good, and so he dieth, Rom. vii. 9. That voice powerfully strikes through his foul, How can ye believe? John vii. 44. Thou canst no more believe than thou canst reach up thine hand to heaven, and bring Christ down from thence. Thus at length he sees, that he can neither help himself by working, nor by believing: and having no more to hang by on the old stock, he falls off. While he is distressed thus, feeing himfelf like to be fwept away with the flood of God's wrath; and yet unable so much as to stretch forth a hand to lay hold of a twig of the tree of life growing on the bank of the river, he is taken up, and ingrafted in the true Vine, the Lord Jesus Christ giving him the spirit of faith.

By what has been faid upon this head, I defign not to rack or distress tender consciences; for though there are but sew such, at this day, yet God forbid I should offend any of Christ's little ones. But, alas! a dead sleep is fallen upon this generation, they will not be awakened, let us go ever so near to the quick: therefore I fear that there is another fort of awakening abiding this fermon-proof generation, which shall make the ears of them that hear it tingle. However, I would not have this to be looked upon as the Sovereign God's stinted method of breaking off sinners from the old stock. But this I assert as a certain truth, that all who are in Christ have been broken off from all these several con-

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fidences; and that they who were never broken off from them, are yet in their natural stock. Nevertheless, if the heafe be pulled down, and the old foundation razed, it is much the same, whether it was taken down stone by stone, or whether it was undermined, and all

fell down together.

Now it is that the branch is ingrafted into Jesus Christ. And as the law, in the hand of the Spirit of God, was the instrument to cut off the branch from the natural stock; so the gospel, in the hand of the fame Spirit, is the instrument used for engrafting it in the supernatural stock, I John i. 3. That which we have feen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. See Ita. Ixi. 1, 2, 3. The gospel is the filver cord let down from heaven, to draw perishing sinners to land. And though the preaching of the law prepares the way of the Lord; yet it is in the word of the gospel that Christ and the sinner meet. Now, as in the natural grafting, the branch being taken up is put into the stock, and, being put into it, becomes one with it, so that they are united; even so, in the spiritual ingrafting, Christ apprehends the sinner, and the finner being apprehended of Christ, apprehends him, and so they become one, Phil. iii. 12.

First, Christ apprehends the sinner by his Spirit, and draws him to himself, 1 Cor. xii. 13. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. The same Spirit which is in the Mediator himself, he communicates to his elect in due time, never to depart from them, but to abide in them as a principle of life. Thus he takes hold of them by his own Spirit put into them; and fo the withered branch gets life. The foul is now in the hands of the Lord of life, and possessed by the Spirit of life: how can he then but live? The man gets a ravishing fight of Christ's excellency, in the glass of the gospel: he sees him a full, suitable, and willing Saviour; and gets a heart to take him, for and instead of all. The Spirit of faith furnisheth him with feet to come to Christ, and hands to receive him. What by nature he could not do, by grace he can, the holy Spi-

rit working in him the work of faith with power.

Secondly, The finner thus apprehended, apprehends Christ by faith, and is one with the blessed stock, Eph. iii. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. The foul that before tried many ways of escape, but all in vain, now looks with the eye of faith, which proves the healing look. As Aaron's rod, laid up in the tabernacle, budded, and brought forth buds, Numb. xvii. 8. So the dead branch, apprehended by the Lord of life, put into, and bound up with the glorious quickening stock, by the Spirit of life, buds forth in actual believing on Jesus Christ, whereby this union is compleated. We having the same Spirit of faith-believe, 2 Cor. iv. 13. Thus the stock and the graft are united, Christ and the Christian are married, faith being the foul's confent to the spiritual marriagecovenant, which, as it is proposed in the gospel to mankind finners indefinitely, so it is demonstrated, attested and brought home, to the man in particular, by the holy Spirit: and fo he being joined to the Lord, is one Spirit with him. Hereby a believer lives in, and for Christ, and Christ lives in, and for the believer, Gal. ii. 20. I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Hos. iii. 3. Thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee. The bonds, then, of this bleffed union are, the Spirit on Christ's part, and faith on the believer's part.

Now both the fouls and bodies of believes are united to Christ. He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, I Cor. vi. 17. The very bodies of believers have this honour put upon them, that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, ver. 19. and the members of Christ, ver. 15. When they sleep in the dust, they sleep in Jesus, I Thess. iv. 14. and it is in virtue of this union they shall be raised up out of the dust again, Rom. viii. 11. He shall quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. In token of this mystical union, the church of believers is called by the name of her head and husband, I Cor. xii. 12. For as the body is one, and bath

many members—so also is Christ.

Use. From what is faid, we may draw the following inferences.

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1. The preaching of the law is most necessary. He that would ingraft, must needs use the prunning-knife. Sinners have many shifts to keep them from Christ; many things by which they keep their hold of the natural stock: therefore they have need to be closely pursued, and hunted out of their sculking holes, and resuges of lies.

2. Yet it is the gospel that crowns the work: the law makes nothing perfect. The law lays open the wound, but it is the gospel that heals. The law strips a man, wounds him, and leaves him half dead: the gospel binds up his wounds, pouring in wine and oil to heal them. By the law we are broken off, but it is by the gospel we are taken up, and implanted in

Christ.

3. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9. We are told of a monster in nature, having two bodies differently animated, as appeared from contrary affections at one and the same time; but so united, that they were served with the self-same legs. Even so, however men may cleave to Christ, call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel, Isa. xlviii. 2. and may be bound up as branches in him, John xv. 2. by the outward ties of sacraments: yet if the Spirit that dwells in Christ dwell not in them, they are not one with him. There is a great difference between adhesion and ingrafting. The ivy clasps and twifts itself about the oak, but it is not one with it, for it still grows on itsown root: fo, to allude to Ifa. iv. 1. many professors take hold of Christ, and eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel, only they are called by his name. They stay themselves upon him, but grow upon their own root: they take him to support their hopes, but their delights are elsewhere.

4. The union between Christ and his mystical members is firm and indissoluble. Were it so that the believer only apprehended Christ, and Christ apprehended not him, we could promise little on the stability of such an union; it might quickly be dissolved: but as the believer apprehends Christ by saith, so Christ appre-

hends him by his Spirit, and none shall pluck him out of his hand. Did the child only keep hold of the nurse, it might at length weary and let go its hold, and so fall away: but if she have her arms about the child, it is in no hazard of falling away, even though it be not actually holding by her. So whatever sinful intermissions may happen in the exercise of faith; yet the union remains sure, by reason of the constant indwelling of the Spirit. Blessed Jesus! All his saints are in thy band, Deut, xxxiii. 3. It is observed by some, that the word Abba is the same, whether you read it forward or backward: whatever the believer's case be, the Lord is still to him Abba, Father.

Lastly, They have an unsure hold of Christ, whom he has not apprehended by his Spirit. There are many half marriages here, where the foul apprehends, Christ, but is not apprehended of him. Hence many fall away, and never rife again: they let go their hold of Christ; and when that is gone, all is gone. These are the branches in Christ that bear not fruit, which the husbandman taketh away, John xv. 2. Quest. How can that be? Answ. These branches are set in the stock by a profession, or an unfound hypocritical faith; they are bound up with it, in the external use of the sacraments; but the flock and they are never knit; therefore they cannot bear fruit. And they need not be cut off, nor broken off; they are by the husbandman only taken away, or (as the word primarily fignifies) lifted up, and fo taken away, because there is nothing to hold them: They are indeed bound up with the stock, but were never united to it.

Quest. How shall I know if I am apprehended of Christ? Answ. You may be satisfied in this enquiry, if

you confider and apply these two things.

First, When Christ apprehends a man by his Spirit, he is so drawn, that he comes away to Christ with his whole heart: for true believing is believing with all the heart, Acts viii. 37. Our Lord's followers are like those who followed Saul at first, men whose hearts God has touched, 1 Sam. x. 26. When the Spirit pours in overcoming grace, they pour out their hearts like water

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 245 before him, Pfal. lxii. 8. They flow unto him like a river, Ita. ii. 2. All nations shall flow unto it, namely, to the mountain of the Lord's house. It denotes not only the abundance of converts, but the disposition of their fouls in coming to Christ: they come heartily and freely. Len with loving-kindness, Jer. xxxi. 3. Thy people willing in the day of thy power, Psal. cx. 3: i. e free, ready, open licarted, giving themselves to thee as free-will offerings. When the bridegroom has the bride's heart, it is a right marriage: but some give their hand to Christ, who give him not their heart. They that are only driven to Christ by terror, will surely leave him again when that terror is gone. Terrors may break a heart of stone, but the pieces into which it is broken still continue to be stone: terrors cannot foften it into a heart of slefth. Yet terror may begin the work, which love crowns. The ftrong wind, the earthquake, and the fire going before, the still small voice, in which the Lord is, may come after them. When the bleffed Jefus is leeking finners to match with him, they are bold and perverse: they will not speak with him, till he hath wounded them, made them captives, and bound them with the cords of death. When this is done, then it is that he makes love to them, and wins their bearts. The Lord tells us, Hos. ii. 16. 20. that his chosen Israel shall be married unto himself. But how will the bride's confent be won? Why, in the first place, he will bring her into the wilderness, as he did the people when he brought them out of Egypt, ver. 14. There she will be hardly dealt with, scorched with thirst, and bitten of serpents: and then he will speak comfortably to her, or as the expression is, he will speak unto her heart. The finner is first driven, and then drawn to Christ. It is with the soul as with Noah's dove; The was forced back again to the ark, because she could find nothing else to rest upon: but when she returned, the would have rested on the outside of it, if Noah had not put forth his hand, and pulled her in, Gen. viii. 9. The Lord fends the avenger of blood in pursuit of the criminal; who with a fad heart leaves his own city, and with tears in his eyes parts with his

old acquaintances, because he dare not stay with them, and he slees for his life to the city of refuge. This is not at all his choice, it is forced work; necessity has no law. But when he comes to the gates, and sees the beauty of the place, the excellency and loveliness of it charm him; then he enters it with heart and good will, saying, This is my rest, and here I will stay: and, as one said in another case, I had perished, unless I had

perished. Secondly, When Christ apprehends a foul, the heart is disengaged from, and turned against sin. As in cutring off the branch from the old flock, the great idol felf is brought down, the man is powerfully taught to deny himself: so, in the apprehending of the sinner by the Spirit, that union is diffolyed which was between the man and his lufts, while he was in the flesh, as the apostle expresses it, Rom. vii. 5. His heart is loosed from them, though formerly as dear to him as the members of his body; as his eyes, legs, or arms; and, instead of taking pleasure in them, as before, he longs to be rid of them. When the Lord Jesus comes to a foul, in the day of converting grace, he finds it like Jerusalem, in the day of her nativity, (Ezek. xvi. 4.) with its navel not cut, drawing its fulfome nourishment and fatisfaction from its lusts; but he cuts off this communication, that he may fet the foul on the breasts of his own confolations, and give it rest in himself. And thus the Lord wounds the head and heart of fin, and the foul comes to him, faying, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit, Jer. xvi. 19.

Of the Benefits flowing to true Believers from their Union with Christ.

V. And, *laftly*, I come to speak of the benefits flowing to true believers from their union with Christ. The chief of the particular benefits which believers have by it, are justification, peace, adoption, fanctification, growth in grace, fruitfulness in good works, acceptance of these works, establishment in the state of grace, support, and a special conduct of providence about

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 247 them. As for communion with Christ, it is such a benefit, as being the immediate confequent of union with him, comprehends all the rest as mediate ones. For as the branch, immediately upon its union with the flock, hath communion with the flock, in all that is in it; so the believer, uniting with Christ, hath communion with him; in which he launcheth forth into an ocean of happiness, is led into a paradife of pleafures, and has a faving interest in the treasure hid in the field of the gospel, the unlearchable riches of Christ, As foon as the believer is united to Christ, Christ himself, in whom all fulness dwells, is his, Cant. ii. 16. My beloved is mine, and I am his. And how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Rom. viii. 32. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, 1 Cor. iii. 22. This communion with Christ is the great comprehensive blessing necessarily slowing from our union with him. Let us now confider the particular benefits flowing from it, before mentioned.

The first particular benefit which a sinner hath by his union with Christ, is justification; for, being united to Christ, he hath communion with him in his righteousness, I Cor. i. 30. But of him are ye in Christ fesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness. He stands no more condemned, but justified before God, as being in Christ, Rom. viii. 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ fesus. The branches hereof are, pardon of sin, and personal

acceptance.

First, His fins are pardoned, the guilt of them is removed. The bond obliging him to pay his debt is cancelled. God the Father takes the pen, dips it in the blood of his Son, croffeth the finners accounts, and blotteth them out of his debt book. The finner out of Christ is bound over to the wrath of God: he is under an obligation in law to go to the prison of hell, and there to lie till he hath paid the utmost farthing. This ariseth from the terrible fanction with which the law is fenced; which is no less than death, Gen. ii. 18. So that the finner, passing the bounds assigned him, is as

248 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. Shimei in another case, a man of death, 1 Kings ii. 42. But now, being united to Christ, God saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom, Job xxxiii. 24. The fentence of condemnation is reverted, the believer is absolved, and set beyond the reach of the condemning law. His fins, which were fet before the Lord, Pfal. xc. 8. fo that they could not be hid, God now takes and casts them all behind his back, Isa. xxxvii. 17. Yea, he casts them into the depths of the fea, Micah vii. 9. What falls into a brook may be got up again; but what is cast into the sea cannot be recovered. But there are fome shallow places in the sea: true, but their fins are not cast there, but into the depths of the fea; and the depths of the fea are devouring depths, from whence they shall never come forth again. But what if they do not fink? He will cast them in with force; fo that they shall go to the ground, and fink as lead, in the mighty waters of the Redeemer's blood. They are not only forgiven, but forgotten, Jer. xxxi. 34. I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their fins no more. And though their afterfins do, in themselves, deserve eternal wrath, and do actually make them liable to temporal strokes, and fatherly chastisements, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, Pfal. lxxxix. 3-33. yet they can never be actually liable to eternal wrath, or the curse of the law; for they are dead to the law in Christ, Rom. vii. 4. They can never fall away from their union with Christ; neither can they be in Christ, and under condemnation at the same time, Rom. viii. 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. This is an inference drawn from that doctrine of the believer's being dead to the law, fet forth by the apostle, chap. vii. 1—6. as is clear from the 2d, 3d, and 4th verses of this eighth chapter. In this respect the justified man is the bleffed man, unto whom the Lord impateth not iniquity, Pfak xxxii. 2. as one who has no intention to charge a debt on another, fets it not down in his account book.

Secondly, The believer is accepted as righteous in God's fight, 2 Cor. v. 21. For he is found in Christ, not

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not having his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, Phil. ii. 9. He could never be accepted of God, as righteous, on account of his own righteousness; because, at best, it is but imperfect; and all righteousness, properly so called, which can abide a trial before the throne of God, is perfect. The very name of it implies perfection: for unless a work be perfectly conformable to the law, it is not right, but wrong; and fo cannot make a man righteous before God, whose judgment is according to truth. Yet, if justice demands a righteousness of one who is in Christ, by which he may be accounted righteous before the Lord, Surely, shall such an one say, in the Lord have I righteousness, Ifa. xiv. 24. The law is fulfilled, its commands are obeyed, its fanction is fatisfied. The believer's Surety has paid the debt. It was exacted, and he answered for it.

Thus the person united to Christ is justified. You may conceive of the whole proceeding herein in this manner. The avenger of blood pursuing the criminal, Christ, as the Saviour of lost sinners, doth by the Spirit apprehend him, and draw him to himself; and he by faith lays hold on Christ: so the Lord our righteousness, and the unrighteous creature, unite. From this union with Christ results a communion with him in his unsearchable riches, and consequently in his righteousness, that white raiment which he has for cloathing the naked, Rev. iii. 18. Thus the righteoulnels of Christ becomes his: and, because it is his by unquestionable title, it is imputed to him; it is reckoned his in the judgment of God, which is always according to truth. So the believing finner, having a righteousness which fully answers the demands of the law, is pardoned and accepted as righteous. See Ifa. xlv. 22. 24. 45. Rom. iii. 24. and chap. v. 1. Now he is a free man. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of those whom God justifieth? Can justice lay any thing to their charge? No, for it is satisfied. Can the law? No, for it has got all its demands on them from Jesus Christ, Gal. ii. 20. I am crucified with Christ. What can the law require more, after it has wounded

250 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State II. their head, poured in wrath in full measure into their foul, and cut off their life, and brought it into the dust of death, by doing all this to Jesus Christ, who is their head, Eph. i. 22. their foul, Acts ii. 25. 27. and their life? Col. i. 4. What is become of the finner's own hand-writing, which would prove the debt against him? Christ has blotted it out, Col. ii. 14. But it may be, justice may get its eye upon it again. No, he took it out of the way. But O that it had been torn in pieces! may the finner say. Yea, so it is; the nails that pierced Christ's hands and feet are driven through it; he nailed it. But what if the torn pieces be set together again? That cannot be; for he nailed it to his crofs, and his crofs was buried with him, and will never rife more, feeing Christ dieth no more. Where is the face-covering that was upon the condemned man? Christ has destroyed it, Isa. xxx. 7. Where is death, that stood before the sinner with a grim face, and an open mouth, ready to devour him? Christ has streatlowed it up in victory, ver. 8. Glory, glory, glory, to him that thus loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

The fecond benefit flowing from the same spring or union with Christ, and coming by the way of justification, is peace: peace with God, and peace of conscience, according to the measure of the sense which the justified have of their peace with God, Rom. v. 1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God. Chap. xiv. 17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Whereas God was their enemy before, now he is reconciled to them in Christ: they are in a covenant of peace with him; and as Abraham was, fo they are the friends of God; he is well pleased with them in his beloved His word, which spoke terror to them formerly, now speaks peace, if they rightly understand its language. And there is love in all his difpensations towards them, which makes all work together for their good. Their consciences are purged of that guilt and filthiness that lay upon them: his conscience purifying blood streams through their souls, by virtue of their

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 251 union with him, Heb. ix. 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ-purge your conscience from dead works, to ferve the living God? The bonds laid on their consciences, by the spirit of bondage, are taken off, never more to be laid on, Rom. viii. 15. For ye have not re: ceived the spirit of bondage again to fear. As soon as the foul becomes conscious of the application of that blood, the conscience is quieted, which falls out sooner or later, according to the measure of faith, and as the only wife God fees meet to time it. Unbelievers may have troubled consciences, which they may get quieted again: but alas! their consciences become peaceable before they become pure; fo their peace is but the feed of greater horror and confusion. Carelessness may give ease for a while to a sick conscience; men neglecting its wounds, they close again of their own accord, before the filthy matter is purged out. Many bury their guilt in the grave of an ill memory: conscience smarts a little, at length the man forgets his fin, and there is an end of it: but this is only an eafe before death. Business, or the affairs of life, often give ease in this case. When Cain is banished from the presence of the Lord, he begins building cities. When the evil spirit came upon Saul, he calls not for, his Bible, nor for the priest, to converse with him about. his case; but for music, to play it away. So many, when their consciences begin to be uneasy, they fill. their heads and hands with business, to divert themselves, and to regain ease at any rate. Yea, some will an over the belly of their convictions, and so get some ease to their consciences, as Hazael gave his master ease by stissing him. Again, the performance of duies may give some ease to disquieted consciences:. ind this is all which legal professors have recourse to, or quieting their consciences. When conscience is vounded, they will pray, confess, mourn, and resolve o do fo no more; and fo they become whole again, vithout an application of the blood of Christ by aith. But they, whose consciences are rightly quieted, ome for peace and purging to the blood of sprinkling. in is a sweet morsel, that makes God's elect sick souls,

252 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. before they get it vomited up. It leaves a sting behind it, which one time or other, will create them no little pain.

Elihu shews us both the case and cure, Job xxxiii; Behold the case which a man may be in, whom God has thoughts of love to. He darteth convictions into his conscience; and makes them stick so fast, that he cannot rid himself of them, ver. 16. He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction. His very body fickens, ver. 19. He is chastned also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with flrong pain. He loseth his stomach, ver. 20. His life abhorreth bread, and his foul dainty meat. His body pines away, fo that there is nothing on him but skin and bone, ver. 21. His sless is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen slick out. Though he is not prepared for death, he has no hopes of life, ver. 22. His foul draweth near unto the grave, (which is the height of his misery) his life to the destroyers; he is looking every moment when devils, there destroyers, Rev. ix. 11. these murderers, or manslayers, John viii. 44 will come and carry away his foul to hell. O dreadful case! Is there any. hope for such? Yes, there is hope. God will keep back his foul from the pit, ver. 18. although he bring him forward to the brink of it. Now see how the sick man is cured. The physician's art cannot prevail here: the disease lies more inward, than that his medicines can reach. It is foul-trouble which has brought the body into his disorder: and therefore the remedies must be applied to the fick man's foul and conscience. The physician for this case, must be a spiritual Physician; the remedies must be spiritual, a righteousnéss, a ranfom, an atonement. Upon the application of these; the soul is cured, the conscience is quieted; and the body recovers, ver. 23, 24, 25, 26. If there be a mef-fenger with kim, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and faith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth; he shall pray unto God, and he shall be favourable unto him, and he shall see bis face with joy. The proper physician for this patient,

is a messenger, an interpreter, ver. 23. that is, as some expositors, not without ground, understand it, the great Physician, Jesus Christ, whom Job had called his Redeemer, chap. xix. 25. He is a Messenger, the Messenger of the covenant of peace, Mal. iii. 1. who comes scasonably to the sick man. He is an Interpreter, the great Interpreter of God's counsels of love to finners, John i. 8. One among a thousand, even the chief among ten thousand, Cant. v. 10. One chosen out of the people, Pial. lxxxix. 29. One to whom the Lord bath given the tongue of the learned—to speak a word in season to him that is weary, Isa. 1. 4, 5, 6. It is he that is with him, by his Spirit, now to convince him of righteousness, John xvi. 8. as he was with him before, to convince him of fin and judgment. His work now is, to fliew unto him his uprightness, or his righteousness, i. e. the Interpreter, Christ's righteousness; which is the only righteousness, arising from the paying of a ransom, and upon which a finner is delivered from going down to the pit, ver. 24. Thus Christ is said to declare God's name, Pfal. xxii. 22. and to preach righteousness, Pfal. lx. 9. The phrase is remarkable: it is not to shew unto the man, but unto man, his righteousness; which not obscurely intimates, that he is more than a man, who shews or declareth this righteousness. Compare Amos iv. 13. He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought. There feems to be in it a fweet allusion to the first declaration of this righteousness unto man, or as the word is, unto Adam, after the fall, while he lay under terror from apprehensions of the wrath of God: which declaration was made by the Messenger, the Interpreter, namely, the eternal Word, the Son of God, called, the voice of the Lord God, Gen. iii. 8. appearing, probably, in human shape. Now, while he, by his Spirit, is the preacher of righteousness to the man, it is supposed that the man lays hold on the offered righteourness; whereupon the ranfom is applied to him, and he is delivered from going down to the pit; for God hath a ransom for him. Which is intimated to him by the words, deliver him, ver. 14. Hereupon his conscience.

254 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. being purged by the blood of atonment, is pacified, and sweetly quieted, He shall pray unto God—and see his face with joy, which before he beheld with horror, ver. 26. that is, in New-Testament language, having an high priest over the house of God, he shall draw near with a true heart, in sull assurance of faith, having his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, Heb. x. 21, 22. But then, what becomes of the body, the weak and weary sless? Why, his sless shall be fresher than a child's, he shall return to the days of his youth, ver. 25. Yea, all his bones (which were chastened with strong pain, ver. 19.) shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee? Psal. xxxv. 10.

A third benefit flowing from union with Chrift, is adoption. Believers, being united to Christ, become children of God, and members of the family of heaven. By their union with him, who is the Son of God by nature, they become the fons of God by grace, John, i. 12. As when a branch is cut off from one tree, and grafted in the branch of another, the ingrafted branch, by means of its union with the adopting branch (as forme not unfitly have called it), is made a branch of the fame flock, with that into which it is ingrafted: So finners, being ingrafted into Jefus Christ, whose name is the Branch, his Father is their Father, his God their God, John xx. 17: And thus they, who are by nature children of the devil, become the children of God. They have the Spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15. namely, the Spirit of the Son, which brings them to God, as children to a father; to pour out their complaints in his bosom, and to seek necessary supply, Gal. iv. 6. Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father. Under all their weaknesses, they have fatherly pity and compasfion shewn them, Psal. ciii. 13. Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Although they were but foundlings, found in a defert land; yet now he keeps them as the apple of his eye, Deut xxii. 10. Whoever purfues them, they have a refuge, Prov. xiv. 26. His children shall have a place of refuge. time of common calamity, they have chambers of pro-

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 255 tection, where they may be hid, until the indignation be overpast, Isa. xxv. 20. And he is not only their refuge for protection, but their portion for provision, in that refuge, Pfal. cxlii. 5. Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. They are provided for for eternity, Heb. xi. 16. He hath prepared for them a city. And what he fees they have need of for time, they thall not want, Mat. vi. 31, 32. Take no thought, faying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be cloathed? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Seasonable correction is likewise their privilege as sons: so they are not fuffered to pass with their faults, as others who are not children, but servants of the family, who at length will be turned out of doors for their miscarriages, Heb. xii. 7. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with fons: for what fon is hewbom the Father chasteneth not? They are heirs of, and shall inherit the promises, Heb. vi. 12. Nay, they are heirs of God, who himself is the portion of their inheritance, Pfal. xvi. 5. and joint-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17. And because they are the children of the great King, and heirs of glory, they have angels for their attendants, who are fent forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14.

A fourth benefit is fanctification, I Cor. i. 30. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wissom, and righteousness, and fanctification. Being united to Christ, they partake of his Spirit, which is the Spirit of holiness. There is a fulness of the Spirit in Christ, and it is not like the fulness of a vessel, which only retains what is poured into it; but it is the fulness of a fountain, for disfusion and communication, which is always sending forth its waters, and yet is always full. The Spirit of Christ, that spiritual sap, which is in the stock, and from thence is communicated to the branches, is the Spirit of grace, Zech. xii. 10. And where the Spirit of grace dwells, there will be found a confluence of all graces. Holiness is not one grace only, but all the graces of the Spirit: it is a constellation of graces; it is all the graces in their seed and root. And as the sap, conveyed from the

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flock into the branch, goes through it, and through every part of it; so the Spirit of Christ sanctifies the whole man. The poison of fin was diffused through the whole spirit, soul, and body of the man; and sanctifying grace pursues it into every corner, 1 Thess. v.23. Every part of the man is fanctified, though no part is perfectly fo. The truth we are fanctified by is not held in the head, as in a prison; but runs, with his sanctifying influences, through heart and life. There are, indeed, fome graces, in every believer, which appears as top-branches above the rest; as meekness in Mofes, patience in Job; but feeing there is, in every child of God, a holy principle going along with the holy law, in all the parts thereof, loving, liking, and approving it; as appears from their universal respect to the commands of God; it is evident that they are endowed with all the graces of the Spirit; because there can be no less in the effect, than there was in the cause.

Now this fanctifying Spirit, whereof believers partake, is unto them, (1.) A Spirit of mortification; through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the body, Rom. viii. 13. fin is crucified in them, Gal. v. 24. They are planted together, (namely with Christ) in the likeness of his death, which was a lingering death, Rom. vi. 5. Sin, in the faint, though not quite dead, yet is dying. If it were dead, it would be taken down from the cross, and buried out of his fight: but it hangs there as yet, working and struggling under its mortal wounds. Look, as when a tree has got fuch a stroke as reaches the heart of it, all the leaves and branches begin to fade and decay: fo, where the fanctifying Spirit comes, and breaks the power of fin, there is a gradual ceasing from it, and dying to it, in the whole man; fo that he no longer lives in the flesh to the lusts of men He does not make fin his trade and bufiness; it is not his great defign, to feek himfelf, and to fatisfy his corrupt inclinations: but he is for Immanuel's land; and is walking in the high-way to it, the way which is called the way of holiness: though the wind from hell, that was on his back before, blows now full in his face, and makes his travelling uncasy, and often drives him off

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 257 the high-way. (2.) This Spirit is a Spirit of vivification to them, for he is the Spirit of life, and makes them live unto righteoufnefs, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. Those that have been planted together with Christ, in the likeness of his death, shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, Rom. vi. 5. At Christ's refurrection, when his foul was re-united with his body, every member of that bleffed body was enabled again to perform the actions of life: fo the foul, being influenced by the fanctifying Spirit of Christ, is enabled more and more to perform the actions of spiritual life. And as the whole of the law, and not fome fcraps of it only, is written on the holy heart; fo believers are enabled to transcribe that law in their conversation. Although they cannot write one line of it without blots, yet God, for Christ's sake, accepts of the performances, in point of fanctification; they being disciples of his

own Son, and led by his own Spirit.

This fanctifying Spirit, communicated by the Lord Jesus to his members, is the spiritual nourishment the branches have from the stock into which they are ingrafted; whereby the life of grace, given them in regeneration, is preferved, continued, and actuated. It is the nourishment whereby the new creature liveth, and is nourished up towards perfection. Spiritual life needs to be fed, and must have supply of nourishment: and believers derive the same from Christ their head, whom the Father has appointed the head of influences to all his members, Col. ii. 19. And not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and hands, having nourishment ministered, or supplied. Now this supply is the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 19. The saints feed richly, eating Christ's stess, and drinking his blood, for their spiritual nourishment: yet our Lord himself teacheth us, that it is the Spirit that quickeneth, even that Spirit who dwells in his bleffed body, John vi. 63. The human nature is united to the divine nature, in the person of the Son, and so (like the bowl in Zechariah's candlestick, Zech. iv.) lies at the fountainhead, as the glorious means of conveyance of influences

258 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. from the fountain of Deity. He receives not the Spirit by measure, but ever hath a fulness of the Spirit, by reason of that personal union. Hence believers, being united to the man Christ, (as the seven lamps to the bowl, by their seven pipes, Zech. iv. 2.) his slesh is to them meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed: for feeding on that bleffed body, (i. e. effectually applying Christ to their souls by faith) they partake more and more of that Spirit, who dwelleth therein, to their spiritual nourishment. The holiness of God can never admit of an immediate union with the finful creature, nor (confequently) an immediate communion with it: yet the creature could not live the life of grace, without communion with the Fountain of life. Therefore, that the honour of God's holiness, and the falvation of finners, might jointly be provided for, the fecond Person of the glorious Trinity, took into a personal union with himself, a sinless human nature; that fo this holy, harmless, and undefiled humanity, might immediately receive a fulness of the Spirit, of which he might communicate to his members, by his divine power and efficacy. Suppose there were a tree, with its root in the earth, and its branches reaching to heaven, the vast distance between the root and the branches would not interrupt the communication between the root and the top-branch: even fo, the distance between the man Christ, who is in heaven, and his members, who are on earth, cannot hinder the communication between them. What though the parts of mystical Christ (viz. the head and the members) are not contiguous, as joined together in the way of corporal union? the union is not therefore the less real and effectual. Yea, our Lord himself shews us, that though we should eat his flesh, in a corporal and carnal manner, yet it would profit nothing, John vi. 63. We should not be one whit holier thereby. But the members of Christ on earth are united to their head in heaven, by the invisible bond of the self-same Spirit

dwelling in both; in him as the head, and in them as the members. The wheels in Ezekiel's vision were not contiguous to the living creatures, yet were united to Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 259 them by an invisible bond of one Spirit in both; so that when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them, and when the living creatures were lift up from the earth, the wheels were lift up, Ezek. i. 19. For, says the prophet, the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels, yer, 20.

Hence we may see the difference between true sanctification, and that shadow of it, which is to be found amongst some strict professors of Christianity, who yet are not true Christians, are not regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, and is of the same kind with what has appeared in many fober heathens. True fanctification is the result of the soul's union with the holy Jesus, the first and immediate receptacle of the sanctifying Spirit; out of whose fullness his members do, by virtue of their union with him, receive fanctifying influences. The other is the mere product of the man's own spirit, which whatever it has, or feems to have of the matter of true holiness, yet does not arise from the supernatural principles, nor to the high aims and ends thereof: for, as it comes from felf, fo it runs out into the dead sea of felf again; and lies as wide of true holiness as nature doth of grace. They who have this bastard holiness, are like common boat-men, who serve themselves with their own oars: whereas the ship bound for Immanuel's land, fails by the blowings of the Divine Spirit. How is it possible, that there should be true sanctification without Christ? Can there be true sanctification, without partaking of the Spirit of holiness? can we partake of that Spirit, but by Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life? The falling dew can as foon make its way through the flinty rock, as influences of grace can come from God to finners, any other way than through him whom the Father hath appointed the head of influences, Col. i. 19. For it bath pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell: and chap. ii. 19. And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands baving nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Hence see, how it comes to pass that many fall away from their seeming fanctification, and never recover: it is because they are not branches truly knit to the true vine. Mean while, others recover from their decays, because of their union with the life-giving stock, by the quickening Spirit, I John ii. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.

A fifth benefit is growth in grace. Having nourishment ministered, they increase with the increase of God, Col. ii. 19. The righteous shall shourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon, Psal. xcii. 12. Grace is of a growing nature: in the way to Zion they go from strength to strength. Though the holy man be at first a little child in grace, yet at length he becomes a young man, a father, I John ii. 13. Though he does but creep in the way to heaven sometimes, yet afterwards "he walks, he runs, he mounts up with wings as eagles," Isa. xl. 31. If a branch, grafted into a stock, never grows, it is a plain evidence of its not hav-

ing knit with the stock.

But some may perhaps say, " If all true Christians " be growing ones, what shall be said of those, who " instead of growing are going back?" I answer, 1st, There is a great difference between the Christian's growing fimply, and his growing at all times. true Christians do grow, but I do not say that they grow at all times. A tree, that has life and nourishment, grows to its perfection, yet it is not always growing; it grows not in the winter, Christians also have their winters, wherein the influences of grace, necessary for growth, are ceased, Cant. v. 2. I seep. It is by faith the believer derives gracious influences from Jesus Christ; as each lamp in the candlestick received oil from the bowl, by the pipe going between them, Zech. iv. 2. Now, if that pipe be stopped, if the saint's faith lie dormant and inactive; then all the rest of the graces will become dim, and feem ready to be extinguifhed: in consequence whereof, depraved nature will gather strength, and become active. What then will become of the foul? Why, there is still one fure ground of hope. The faint's faith is not as the hypocrite's, like a pipe laid short of the fountain, whereby

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 261 there can be no conveyance: it still remains a bond of

union between Christ and the soul: and therefore, because Christ lives, the believer shall live also, John xiv. 19. The Lord Jesus puts in his hand by the hole of the door, and clears the means of conveyance: and then influences for growth flow, and the believer's graces look fresh and green again, Hos. xiv. 7. They that dwell under his shadow shall return: they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine. In the worst of times, the saints have a principle of growth in them, I John iii. 9. His feed remaineth in him. Therefore, after decays they revive again; namely, when the winter is over, and the Sun of Righteousness returns to them with his warm influences. Mud thrown into a pool may lie there at ease, but if it be cast into a fountain, the spring will at length work it out, and run clear as formerly. 2dly, Chriftians may mistake their growth, and that two ways. (1.) By judging of their case according to their prefent feeling. They observe themselves, and cannot perceive themselves to be growing: but there is no reafon thence to conclude they are not growing, Mark iv. 27. The feed springs and grows up, he knoweth not how. Were a person to fix his eye ever so stedsastly on the fun running his race, or on a growing tree, he would not perceive the fun moving, nor the tree growing: but if he compare the tree as it now is, with what it was fome years ago; and consider the place in the heavens where the fun was in the morning; he will certainly perceive the tree has grown, and the fun has moved. În like manner may the Christian know whether he be in a growing or declining state, by comparing his prefent with his former condition. (2.) Christians may mistake their case, by measuring their growth by the advances of the top only, not of the root. Though a man be not growing taller, he may be growing stronger. If a tree be taking with the ground, fixing itself in the earth, and spreading out its roots, it is certainly growing, although it be nothing taller than formerly. So, although a Christian may want the sweet consolations, and flashes of affection which he had; yet, if he be growing in humility, felf-denial, and fense of needy

262 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. dependence on Jesus Christ, he is a growing Christian, Hos. xiv. 5. I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall cast

forth his roots as Lebanon.

Quest. But do hypocrites grow at all? and if so, how shall we distinguish between their growth, and true Christian growth? Answ. To the first part of the question; hypocrites do grow. The tares have their growth, as well as the wheat: the feed that fell among thorns did fpring up, Luke viii. 7. only it did bring no fruit to perfection, ver. 14. Yea, a true Christian may have a false growth. James and John seemed to grow in the grace of holy zeal, when their spirits grew so hot in the cause of Christ, that they would have fired whole villages for not receiving their Lord and Master, Luke ix. 54. They faid, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to some down from beaven, and confume them, even as Elias did? But it was indeed no fuch thing; and therefore he turned and rebuked them, ver. 55. and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit you are of. To the second part of the question, it is answered, that there is a peculiar beauty in the Christian growth, distinguishing It from all false growth: it is universal, regular, proportionable. It is a growing up unto him in all things, rebich is the head, Eph. iv. 15. The growing Christian grows proportionably, in all the parts of the new-man. Under the kindly influences of the Sun of Righteousmess, believers grow up as calves of the stall, Mal. iv. 2. You would think it a monsterous growth in these creatures, if you saw their heads grow, and not their bodies; or if you faw one leg grow, and another not; if all the parts do not grow proportionably. Ay, but fuch is the growth of many in religion. They grow like rickety children, who have a big head, but a flender body: they get more knowledge into their heads, but no more holiness into their hearts and lives. They grow very hot outwardly, but very cold inwardly; like men in the fit of the ague. They are more taken up about the externals of religion than formely; yet as great strangers to the power of godliness as ever. If a garden is watered with the hand, some of the plants will readily get much, fome little, fome no water at all; Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 263

and therefore fome wither, while others are coming forward: but after a shower from the clouds, all come forward together. In like manner, all the graces of the Spirit grow proportionably, by the special influences of divine grace. The branches ingrafted in Christ, growing aright, do grow in all the feveral ways of growth at once. They grow inward, growing into Christ, (Eph. iv. 15.) uniting more closely with him; and cleaving more firmly to him as the head of influences, which is the spring of all other true Christian growth. They grow outward in good works, in their life and conversation. They not only, with Naphtali, give goodly words; but, like Joseph, they are fruitful boughs. They grow upward in heavenly mindedness, and contempt of the world; for their conversation is in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. And, finally, they grow downward in humility and felf-loathing. The branches of the largest growth in Christ, are, in their own eyes, less than the least of all saints, Eph. iii. 8. the chief of finners, I Tim. i. 15. more brutish than any man, Prov. xxx. ii. They fee that they cannot do any thing, no, not fo much as to think any thing as of themselves, 2 Cor. iii. 5. that they deferve nothing, being not worthy of the least of all the mercies shewed unto them, Gen. xxx. 10. and that they are nothing, 2 Cor. xii. 2.

A fixth benefit is fruitfulnefs. The branch ingrafted into Christ is not barren, but brings forth fruit, John xv. 5. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For that very end are souls married to Christ, that they may bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4. They may be branches in Christ, by profession, but not by real implantation, that are barren branches. Whoever is united to Christ, brings forth the fruit of gospel obedience, and true holinefs. Faith is always followed with good works. The believer is not only come out of the grave of his natural state; but he has put off his grave-cloaths, namely, reigning lusts, in the which he walked like a ghost; being dead while he lived in them, Col. iii. 7, 8. For Christ has said of him as of Lazarus, Loofe him, and let him go, now he has put on Christ; he personates him (so to

264 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. speak) as a beggar, in borrowed robes, represents a king on the stage, walking as he also walked. Now the fruit of the Spirit in him, is in all goodness, Eph. v. q. The fruits of holiness will be found in the hearts, lips, and lives of those who are united to Christ. The hidden man of the heart is not only a temple built for God, and confecrated to him; but used and employed for him, where love, fear, truft, and all other parts of unfeen religion are exercifed, Phil. iii. 3. For we are the circumcifion, which worship God in the Spirit. The heart is no more the devil's common, where thoughts go free; for there even vain thoughts are hated, Pfal. cxix. 113. But it is God's inclosure, hedged about as a garden for him, Cant. iv. 16. It is true, there are weeds of corruption, because the ground is not perfectly healed: but the man, in the day of his new creation, is fet to dress it, and keep it. A live coal from the altar has touched his lips, and they are purified, Pfal. xv. 1, 2, 3. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dreell in thy holy hill? He that (peaketh the truth in his heart: he that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. There may be, indeed, a smooth tongue, where there is a false heart. The voice may be Jacob's, while the hands are Efau's. If any man among you feem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain, James i. 26. The power of godliness will rule over the tongue, though a world of iniquity. If one be a Galilean, his speech will bewray him; he will speak, not the language of Ashdod, but the language of Canaan: he will neither be dumb in religion, nor will his tongue walk at random, feeing to the double guard, which nature hath given the tongue, grace hath added a third. The fruits of holiness will be found in his outward conversation; for he hath clean hands, as well as a pure heart, Pfal. xxiv. 4. He is a godly man, and religiously discharges the duties of the first table of the law: he is a righteous man, and honestly performs the duties of the second table. In his convertation he is a good Christian, and a good neighbour too. He carries it towards God, as if men's

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eyes were upon him; and towards men, as believing God's eye to be upon him. Those things which God hath joined in his law, he dares not in his practice

put asunder.

Thus the branches in Christ are full of good fruits. And those fruits are a cluster of vital actions, whereof Jefus Christ is the principle and end: the principle; for he lives in them, and the life they live is by faith in the Son of God, Gal. ii. 20. The end, for they live to him, and to them to live is Christ, Philip. i. 21. The duties of religion are in the world, like fatherless children, in rags: some will not take them in, because they never loved them, nor their Father: some take them in, because they may be serviceable to thein: but the faints take them in for their Father's fake, that is, for Christ's sake; and they are lovely in their eyes, because they are like him. O! whence is this new life of the faints! Surely it could never have been hammered out of the natural powers of their fouls, by the united force of all created power. In eternal barrenness should their womb have been shut up; but that being married to Christ, they bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4.8

If you ask me, "How your nourishment, growth, " and fruitfulness may be forwarded?" I offer this advice. (1.) Make fure work, as to your knitting with the stock, by faith unfeigned; and beware of hypocrify: a branch that is not found at the heart, will certainly wither. The trees of the Lord's planting are trees of righteousness, Isa. lxi. 3. So when others fade, they bring forth fruit. Hypocrify is a difease in the vitals of religion, which will confume all at length. It is a leak in the ship, that will certainly fink it. Sincerity of grace will make it lasting, be it ever so weak: as the smallest twig, that is sound at the heart, will draw nourishment from the stock, and grow; while the greatest bough that is rotten, can never recover, because it receives no nourishment. (2.) Labour to be steedfast in the truths and way of God. An unsettled and wavering judgment, is a great enemy to Christian growth and fruitfulness, as the apostle teaches, Eph.

iv. 14, 15. That we henceforth be no more children toffed to and fro, and caried about with every wind of doctrine: but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. A rolling stone gathers no mofs, and a wavering judgment makes a fruitless life. Though a tree be never so sound, yet how can it grow, or be fruitful, if you be still removing it out of one soil into another? (3.) Endeavour to cut off the fuckers, as gardeners do, that their trees may thrive. These are unmortified lusts; therefore mortify your members that are upon the earth, Col. iii. 5. When the Israelites got meat to their lusts, they got leanness to their souls. She that has many hungry children about her hand, and must be still putting into their mouths, will have much ado to get a bit put into her own. They must refuse the cravings of inordinate affections, who would have their fouls to profper. Lastly, Improve, for these ends, the ordinances of God. The courts of our God are the place where the trees of righteousness flourish, Psal. xcii. 12. The waters of the fanctuary are the means appointed of God to cause his people to grow as willows by the water courses. Therefore drink in with desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. Come to these wells of salvation; not to look at them only, but to draw water out of them. The facrament of the Lord's supper is in a special manner appointed for these ends. It is not only a solemn public profesfion, and a feal of our union and communion with Christ; but it is a means of most intimate communion with him; and strengthens our union with him, our faith and love, repentance, and other graces, 1 Cor. x. 16. The cup of bleffing which we blefs, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? And chap. xii. 13. We have been all made to drink into one Spirit. Give yourselves unto prayer; open your mouths wide, and he will fill them. By these means the branches in Christ may be further nourished, grow up, and bring forth much fruit.

A feventh benefit is, the acceptance of their fruits of holiness before the Lord. Though they be very im-

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 267 perfect, they are accepted, because they savour of Christ, the bleffed ftock, which the branches grow upon; while the fruits of others are rejected of God, Gen. iv. 4, 5. The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain and his offering he had no respect. Comp. Heb. xi. 3. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent facrifice than Cain. O how defective are the faints duties in the eye of the law! The believer himself espies many faults in his best performances; yet the Lord graciously receives them. There is no grace planted in the heart, but there is a weed of corruption hard by its fide, while the faints are in this lower world. Their very fincerity is not without mixture of diffimulation or hypocrify, Gal. ii. 13. Hence there are defects in the exercise of every grace; in the performance of every duty: depraved nature always drops fomething to stain their best works. There is still a mixture of darkness with their clearest light. Yet this does not marr their acceptance, Cant. vi. 10. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning? or as the dawning? Behold how Christ's spouse is esteemed and accepted of her Lord, even when the looks forth as the morning, whose beauty is mixed with the blackness of the night! When the morning was looking out, as the word is, Judges xix. 26. i. e. In the dawning of the day, as we read it. So the very dawning of grace and good-will to Christ, grace peeping out from under a mass of darkness in believers, is pleasant and acceptable to him, as the break of day is to the weary traveller. Though the remains of unbelief make the hand of faith to shake and tremble; yet the Lord is fo well pleased with it, that he employs it to carry away pardons and supplies of grace from the throne of grace, and the fountain of grace. His faith was effectual, who cried out, and faid with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief, Mark ix. 24. Though the remains of fensual affections make the flame of their love weak and smoky, he turns his eyes from the smoke, and beholds the flame, how fair it is, Cant. iv. 10. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! The smell of their under garment, of inherint holiness, as imperfect as it is, is like the smell M m 2

268 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. of Lebanon, ver. 11. and that because they are covered with their elder brother's cloaths, which makes the fons of God to smell as a field which the Lord hath blessed. Their good works are accepted: their cups of cold water, given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall not want a reward. Though they cannot offer for the tabernacle, gold, filver, and brafs, and onyx-stones, let them come forward with what they have; if it were but goats-hair, it shall not be rejected: if it were but ram-skins, they shall be kindly accepted; for they are dyed red, dipped by faith in the Mediator's blood, and so presented unto God. A very ordinary work done in faith, and from faith, if it were but the building of a wall about the city, is a great work, Neh. vi. 3. If it were but the bestowing of a box of ointment on Christ, it shall never be forgotten, Mat. xxvi. 13. Even a cup of cold water only, given to one of Christ's little ones, in the name of a disciple, shall be rewarded, Mat. x. 42. Nay, not a good word for Christ shall drop from their mouths, but it shall be registered in God's book of remembrance, Mal. iii. 16. Nor shall a tear drop from their eyes for him, but he will put it in his bottle, Psal. lvi. 8. Their will is accepted for the deed; their forrow for the want of will, for the will itself, 2 Cor. viii. 12. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hatb not. Their groanings, when they cannot well word their defires, are heard in heaven; the meaning of those groans is well known there, and they will be returned like the dove, with an olive branch of peace in her mouth. See Rom. vii. 26, 27. Their mites are better than other men's talents. Their lifping and broken fentences are more pleasant to their Father in heaven, than the most fluent and flourishing speeches of those that are not in Christ. Their voice is sweet, even when they are ashamed it should be heard; their countenance is comely, even when they blush, and draw a veil over it, Cant. iii. 14. The Mediator takes their petitions, blots out some parts, rectifies others, and then presents

them to the Father, in consequence whereof they pass

in the court of heaven.

Every true Christian is a temple to God. If you look for facrifices, they are not wanting there; they offer the facrifice of praise, and do good, with such facrifices God is well pleased, Heb. xiii. 15, 16. Christ himself is the altar that fanctifies the gift, ver. 10. But what comes of the skins and dung of their facrifices? they are carried away without the camp. If we look for incense, it is there too. The graces of the Spirit are found in their hearts: and the Spirit of the crucified Christ fires them, and puts them in exercise; as the fire was brought from the altar of burnt-offering, to set the incense in a slame; then they mount heaven-ward, like pillars of smoke, Cant. iii. 6. But the best of incense will leave ashes behind it: yes, indeed; but as the priest took away the ashes of the incense in a golden-dish, and threw them out; so our great High-priest takes away the ashes and refuse of all the saint's services, by his

meditation in their behalf.

An eighth benefit, flowing from union with Christ, is establishment. The Christian cannot fall away, but must persevere unto the end, John x. 28. They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. Indeed, if a branch do not knit with the stock, it will fall away when shaking winds arise: but the branch knit to the stock stands fast, whatever winds blows. Sometimes a stormy wind of temptation blows from hell, and tosseth the brauches in Christ the true vine: but their union with him, is their fecurity; moved they may be, but removed they never can be. The Lord will with the temptation also make a way to escape, I Cor. x. 13. Calms are never of any continuance: there is almost always fome wind blowing; and therefore branches are rarely altogether at rest. But sometimes violent winds arise, which threaten to rend them from off their stock. Even so it is with faints; they are daily put to it to keep their ground against temptation: fometimes the wind from hell rifeth fo high, and blows fo furiously, that it makes even top-branches to sweep the ground; yet being knit to Christ, their stock, they get up again, in spight of the most violent efforts of the prince of the power of the air, Pfal. xciv. 18. When I faid my foot 270 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. But the Christian improves by this trial; and is so far from being damaged, that he is benefited by it, as it discovers what hold the soul has of Christ, and what hold Christ has of the soul. As the wind in the bellows, which would blow out the candle, blows up the fire: even so it often comes to pass, that such temptations enliven the true Christian, awakening the graces of the Spirit in him; and, by that means, discover both the reality and the strength of grace in him. And hence, as Luther, that great man of God saith, "One Christian, who hath had experience of temptation, is worth a thousand others."

Sometimes a stormy wind of trouble and perfecution, from the men of the world, blows upon the vine, i.e. mystical Christ: but union with the stock is a sufficient fecurity to the branches. In a time of the church's peace, and outward prosperity, while the angels hold the winds that they blow not, there are a great many branches taken up, and put into the flock, which never knit with it, nor live by it, though they be bound up with it, by the bonds of external ordinances. Now these may stand a while on the stock, and stand with great eafe while the calm lasts. But when once the storms arise, and the winds blow, they will begin to fall off one after another: and the higher the wind rifeth, the greater will the number be that falls. Yea, fome strong boughs of that fort, when they fall, will, by their weight, carry others of their own kind quite down to the earth with them; and will bruise and press down. fome true branches in fuch a manner, that they would also fall off, were it not for their being knit to the stock; in virtue whereof they get up their heads again, and cannot fall off, because of that fast hold which the stock has of them. Then it is that many branches, which before were high and eminent, are found lying on the earth withered, and fit to be gathered up and cast into the fire, Matth. xiii. 6. When the fun was up, they were scorched: because they had no root, they withered away. John xv. 6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast

them into the fire, and they are burned. But however . violently the winds blow, not any of the truly ingrafted branches, that are knit with the stock, are found missing, when the storm is changed into a calm, John xvii. 12. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost. The least twig growing in Christ shall stand it out and subsist; when the tallest cedars growing on their own root, shall be laid flat on the ground, Rom. viii. 35. " Who shall separate us from the love " of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecu-"tion, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" See ver. 36, 37, 38, 39. However severely Israel be fifted, yet shall not the least grain (or as it is in the original language, a little stone) fall upon the earth, Amos ix. 9. It is an allusion to the sisting of fine peble stones from among heaps of dust and sand; though the sand and dust fall to the ground, be blown away with the wind, and trampled under foot, yet there shall not fall on the earth so much as a little stone, such is the exactness of the sieve, and care of the sifter. There is nothing more ready to fall on the earth than a stone: yet, if professors of religion be lively stones, built on Christ, the chief corner stone, although they be little stones, they shall not fall to the earth, whatever storm beat upon them. See I Pet. ii. 4, 5, 6. All the good grain in the church of Christ is of this kind; they are stones, in respect of folidity, and lively stones, in respect of activity. If men be solid substantial Christians, they will not be like chaff, toffed to and fro with every wind; having fo much of the liveliness, that they have nothing of the stone: and if they be lively Christians, whose spirit will stir in them, as Paul's did, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry, Acts xvii. 16. they will not lie like stones, to be turned over, hither and thicker, cut and carved, according to the lusts of men; having so much of the stones as leaves nothing of liveliness in them.

Our God's house is a great house, wherein are not only vessels of gold, but also of earth, 2 Tim. ii. 20. Both these are apt to contract silthiness; and therefore when God brings trouble upon the church, he hath an eye to both. As for the vessels of gold, they are not

destroyed, but purged by a fiery trial, in the furnace of affliction, as gold-smiths purge their gold, Isa. i. 25. I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross. But destruction is to the vessels of earth; they shall be broken in shivers, as a potter's vessel, ver. 28. And the destruction (or breaking) of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together. It seems to be an allusion to that law for breaking the vessels of earth, when unclean; while vessels of wood, and consequently vessels of gold, were only to be rinsed, Lev. xv. 12.

A ninth benefit is support. If thou be a branch ingrafted in Christ, the root beareth thee. The believer leans on Christ, as a weak woman in a journey, leaning upon her beloved husband, Cant. viii. 5. He stays himself upon him, as a seeble old man stays himself on his staff, Isa. 1. 10. He rolls himself on him, as one rolls a burden, he is not able to walk under, off his own back, upon another who is able to bear it, Psal. xxii. 8. marg. There are many weights to hang upon, and press down the branches in Christ the true vine. But you know whatever weights hang on the branches, the stock bears all; it bears the branch and the weight

that is upon it too.

First, Christ supports believers in him under a weight of outward troubles. This is a large promise, Isa. xliii. 2. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. See how David was supported under a heavy load, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. His city Ziklag was burnt, his wives were taken captives, his men spoke of stoning him: nothing was left him but his God and his faith; but by his faith he encouraged himself in his God. The Lord comes, and lays his cross on his people's shoulders; it presset them down, they are like to fink under it, and therefore cry, Master, save us, we perish: but he supports them under their burden; he bears them up, and they bear their cross. Thus the Christian, with a weight of outward troubles upon him, goes lightly under his burden, having the everlasting arms underneath him. The Chriftian has a spring of comfort, which he cannot lose; and therefore never wants fomething to support him. If a

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 273 man has all his riches in money, robbers may take thete away; and then what has he more? But though the landed man be robbed of his money, yet his lands remain for his support. They that build their comfort on worldly goods, may quickly be comfortless: but they that are united to Christ shall find comfort, when all the streams of worldly enjoyments are dried up, Job vi. 13. Is not my help in me? And is wisdom driven quite from me? q. d. Though my substance is gone; though my fervants, my children, my health, and foundness of body, are all gone; yet my grace is not gone too. Though the Sabeans have driven away my oxen and affes, and the Chaldeans have driven away my camels, they have not driven away my faith, and my hope too; these are yet in me, they are not driven from me; so that by them I can fetch comfort from heaven, when I can'

have none from earth.

Secondly, Christ supports his people under a weight of inward troubles and discouragements. Many times heart and flesh fail them, but then God is the strength of their heart, Plal. Ixxiii. 26. They may have a weight of guilt pressing them. This is a load that will make the back bend, and the spirits sink: but he takes it off, and puts a pardon in their hand: while they cast their burden upon him. Christ takes the soul, as one marries a widow under a burden of debt; and fo when the creditors come to Christ's spouse, she carries them to her husband, confesseth the debt, declares she is not able to pay, and lays all upon him. The Christian sometimes, through carelesness loseth his discharge; he cannot find it, however he fearch for it. The law takes that opportunity, and proceeds against him, for a debt paid already. God hides his face, and the foul is distressed. Many arrows go through the heart now; many long accounts are laid before the man, which he reads and acknowledges. Often does he fee the officers coming to apprehend him, and the prison door open to receive him. What elfe keeps him from finking utterly under discouragements in this case, but the everlasting arms of a Mediator underneath him, and that he relies upon the great Surety? Further, they

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bat, like the eagle, first slies alost (by faith), and then comes down to the prey, Psal. xxxiv. 5. They looked to him, and were lightened. Finally, They have a weight of weakness and wants upon them, but they cast over that burden on the Lord, their strength, and he sustains them, Psal. lv. 22. With all their wants and weakness, they are cast upon him; as the poor, weak, and naked babe, coming out of the womb, is cast into the lap of one appointed to take care of it, Psal. xxii. 10. Though they be destitute (as a shrub in the wilderness, which the foot of every beast may tread down) the Lord will regard them, Psal. cii. 17. It is no marvel, that the weakest plant be safe in a garden: but our Lord Jesus Christ is a hedge for protection to his weak and dessure the same treatment of the same treatment of the same treatment.

titute ones, even in a wilderness.

Object. But if the faints be so supported, how is it that they fall so often, under temptations and discouragements? Answ. (1.) How long soever they fall at

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 275 any time, they never fall off; and that is a great matter. They are kept by the power of God, through faith unto falvation, 1 Pet. i. 5. Hypocrites may fall, so as to fall off, and fall into the pit, as a bucket falls into a well when the chain breaks. But though the child of God may fall, and that fo low as the waters go over his head; yet there is still a bond of union between Christ and him; the chain is not broken; he will not go to the ground; he will be drawn up again, Luke xxii. 31, 32. The Lord faid, Simon, Simon, Satan bath defired to have you, that be may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. (2.) The falls of the faints flow from their not improving their union with Christ, their not making use of him by faith, for staying or bearing them up, Psal. xxvi. 13. I had fainted, unless I had believed. While the nurse holds the child in her arms, it cannot fall to the ground: yet if the unwary child hold not by her, it may fall backwards in her arms, to its great hurt. Thus David's fall broke his bones, Psal. li. 8. but it did not break the bond of union between Christ and him: the Holy Spirit, the bond of that union, was not taken from him, ver. 11.

The last benefit I shall name, is, the special care of the husbandman, John xv. 12. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit. Believers, by virtue of their union with Christ, are the objects of God's special care and providence. Mystical Christ is God's vine; other societies in the world are but wild olive-trees. The men of the world are but God's out-field; the faints are his vineyard, which he has a special property in, and a special concern for, Cant. viii. 12. My vineyard, which is mine, is before me. He that flumbers not nor fleeps, is the keeper of it; he does keep it; lest any hurt it, he will keep it night and day: he, in whose hands is the dew of heaven, will water it every moment, Isa. xxvii. 3. He dresseth and purgeth it, in order to further fruitfulness, John xv. 2. He cuts off the luxuriant twigs, that mar the fruitfulness of the branch. This is done, especially by the word, and by the cross, or afflictions; the saints need

276 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. the ministry of the word, as much as the vineyard needeth one to dress and prune the vines, I Cor. iii. 9. We are labourers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. And they need the cross too, I Pet. i. 6.

Therefore, if we were to reckon the cross amongst the benefits flowing to belivevers from their union with Christ, I judge that we should not reckon amiss. Sure I am, in their fufferings they fuffer with him, Rom. viii. 17. The affurances which they have of the cross, have rather the nature of a promise than of a threatening, Psal. lxxxix. 30—33. If his children for sake my law, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not un'erly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. This looks like a tutor's engaging to a dying father, to take care of the children left with him, and to give them both nurture and admonition for their good. The covenant of grace truly beats the spears of affliction into pruning hooks, to them that are in Christ, Isa. xxvii. 9. By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his fin. Why, then, should we be angry with our cross? why should we be frightened at it? The believer must take up his cross, and follow his Leader, the Lord Jesus Christ. He must take up his every day's cross, Luke ix. 23. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily. Yea, he must take up his holy-days cross too, Lam. iii. 22. Thou hast called, as in a solemn day, my terrors round about. The church of the Jews had, for a long time, many a pleasant meeting at the temple, on solemn days, for the worship of God; but they got a folemnity of another nature, when God called together, about the temple and city, the Chaldean army, that burnt the temple, and laid Jerusalem on heaps. And as the church of God is yet militant in this lower region, how can it be but the clouds will return after the rain? But the cross of Christ (which name the faint's troubles do bear) is a kindly name to the believer. It is a cross indeed; not to the believer's graces, but to his corruptions. The hypocrite's feemHead II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 277 ing graces may indeed breathe out their last on a cross, as those of the stony-ground hearers did, Matt. xiii. 6. When the sun (of persecution, ver. 21.) was up, they were secrebed: and because they had not root, they withered away. But never did one of the real graces in a believer die upon the cross yet. Nay, as the candle shines brightest in the night, and the fire burns fiercest in intense. frost; so the believer's graces are ordinarily most vigor-

ous in a time of trouble.

There is a certain pleasure and sweetness in the cross, to them who have their fenses exercised to discern, and to find it out. There is a certain sweetness in a man's deeing himself upon his trials for heaven, and standing candidate for glory. There is a pleasure in travelling over those mountains, where the Christian can see the prints of Christ's own feet, and the footsteps of the flock, who have been there before him. How pleafant is it to a faint, in the exercise of grace, to see how a good God croffeth his corrupt inclinations, and prevents his folly! How fweet is it to behold those thieves upon the cross! How refined a pleasure is there in observing how God draws away provision from unruly lusts, and so pincheth them, that the Christian may get them governed! Of a truth, there is a paradife within this thorn-hedge. Many a time the people of God are in bonds, which are never loosed, till they be bound with cords of affliction. God takes them, and throws them into a fiery furnace, that burns off their bonds; and then, like the three children, Dan. iii. 25. they are loose, walking in the midst of the fire. God gives his children a portion with one bitter ingredient; if that will not work upon them, he will put in a fecond, a third, and fo on, as there is need, that they may work together for their good, Rom. viii. 28. With cross-winds he hastens them to their harbour. They are often found in such ways, as that the cross is the happiest foot they can meet with: well may they falute it, as David did Abigail, faying, Bleffed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me, I Sam. xxv. 32. Worldly things are often such a load to the Christian, that he moves but very slowly heaven-

278 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. ward. God fends a wind of trouble that blows the burden off the man's back, and then he walks more fpeedily on his way, after God hath drawn some gilded earth from him, that was drawing his heart away from God, Zeph. iii. 12. I will also leave in the midst of thee, an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. It was an observation of an Heathen moralist, "That no history makes mention of any " man who hath been made better by riches." I doubt whether our modern histories can supply the defect of ancient histories in this point. But fure I am, many have been the worfe for riches: thousands have been hugged to death, in the embraces of a finiling world; and many good men have got wounds from outward prosperity, that must be cured by the cross. I remember to have read of one, who having an impostume in his breast, had in vain used the help of phyficians: but being wounded with the fword, the impoftume broke; and his life was faved by that accident, which threatened immediate death. Often have spiritual impostumes gathered in the breasts of God's people, in time of outward prosperity, and been thus broken and discussed by the cross. It is kindly for believers to be healed by stripes: although they are usually fo weak as to cry out for fear, at the fight of the pruning hook, as if it were the destroying ax; and to think that the Lord is coming to kill them, when he is indeed coming to cure them.

I shall now conclude, addressing myself in a few

words, first to faints, and next to sinners.

I. To you that are faints, I fay,

First, Strive to obtain and keep up actual communion and fellowship with Jesus Christ; that is, to be still deriving fresh supplies of grace, from the fountain thereof in him, by faith: making suitable returns of them, in the exercise of grace and holy obedience. Beware of estrangement between Christ and your souls. If it has got in already (which seems to be the case of many this day), endeavour to get it removed. There are multitudes in the world that slight Christ, though you should not slight him: Many have turned their

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 279 backs on him, that looked fair for heaven. The warm fun of outward peace and prosperity, has caused some to cast their cloak of religion from them, who held it fast when the wind of trouble was blowing upon them: and will ye also go away? John vi. 67. The basest ingratitude is stampt on your slighting of communion with Chirist, Jer. ii. 31. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel: a land of darkness: wherefore say my people, We are lords, we will come no more unto thee? Oh! beloved, is this your kindness to your friend? It is unbecoming any wife to flight converse with her husband, but her especially who was taken from a prison or a dunghill, as you were, by your Lord. But remember, I pray you, this is a very ill chosen time to live at a distance from God: it is a time in which Divine Providence frowns upon the land we live in; the clouds of wrath are gathering, and are thick above our heads? It is not a time for you to be out of your chambers, Isa. xxvi. 20. They that now are walking most closely with God, may have enough to do to stand when the trial comes: how hard will it be for others then. who are like to be furprifed with troubles, when guilt is lying on their consciences unremoved! To be awakened out of a found fleep, and cast into a raging sea, as Jonah was, will be a fearful trial. To feel trouble before we see it coming, to be past hope before we have any fear, is a very fad case. Wherefore break down your idols of jealousy, mortify these lusts, these irregular appetites and defires, that have ftolen away your hearts, and left you like Sampson, without his hair, and fay, I will go and return to my first busband; for then was it better with me than now, Hos. ii. 7!

Secondly, Walk as becomes those that are united to Christ. Evidence your union with him, by walking as he also walked, I John ii. 6. If you be brought from under the power of darkness, let your light shine before men. Shine as lights in the world, holding forth the world of life, as the lanthorn holds the candle, which being in it, shines through it, Philip. ii. 15, 16. Now that yoù profess Christ to be in you, let his image shine forth in your conversation, and remember that the bu-

280 Of the Union between Christ and Believers. State III. finess of your lives is, to prove by practical arguments

what you profess.

1. You know the character of a wife, she that is married, careth how she may please her husband. Go you and do likewise; walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, Col. i. 10. This is the great business of life: you must please him, though it should displease all the world. What he hates must be hateful to you, because he hates it. Whatever lusts come in suit of your hearts, deny them, feeing the grace of God has appeared, teaching us so to do, and you are joined to the Lord. Let him be a covering to your eyes; for you have not your choice to make, it is made already; and you must not dishonour your head. A man takes care of his feet, because, if he catches cold there it flies up to his head. Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid, lays the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 15. Wilt thou take that heart of thine, which is Christ's dwelling place, and lodge his enemies there? Wilt thou take that body, which is his temple, and defile it, by using the members thereof as instruments of sin?

2. Be careful to bring forth fruit, and much fruit. The branch well laden with fruit, is the glory of the vine, and of the husbandman too, John xv. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples A barren tree stands safer in a wood than in an orchard; and branches in Christ, that bring not forth fruit, will be taken away, and cast into the fire.

3. Be heavenly-minded, and maintain a holy contempt of the world. You are united to Christ, he is your Head and Husband, and is in heaven: wherefore your hearts should be there also, Col. iii. 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Let the serpent's seed go on their belly, and eat the dust of this earth: but let the members of Christ be assumed to bow down, and feed with them.

4. Live and act dependently, depending by faith on Jesus Christ. That which grows on its own root is a tree, not a branch. It is of the nature of a branch, to

Head II. Of the Union between Christ and Believers. 28t depend on the stock for all, and to derive all its sap from thence. Depend on him for life, light, strength, and all spiritual benefits, Gal. ii. 20. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the sless, I live by the faith of the Son of God. For this cause, in the inystical union, strength is united to weakness, that death and earth may mount up on borrowed wings. Depend on him for temporal benefits also; Matth. vi. 2. Give us this day our daily bread. If we have trusted him with our eternal concerns, let us be ashamed to distrust him in the matter of our provision in the world.

Lastly, Be of a meek disposition, and an uniting temper with the fellow members of Christ's body, as being united to the meek Jesus, the blessed centre of union. There is a prophecy to this purpose concerning the kingdom of Christ, Isa. ii. 6. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. It is an allusion to the beasts in Noah's ark. The beasts of prey, that were wont to kill and devour others, when once they came into the ark, lay down in peace with them: the lamb was in no hazard by the wolf there; nor the kid, by the leopard. There was a beautiful accomplishment of it in the primitive church, Acts iv. 32. The multitude of them that believed were of one beart and of one foul. And this prevails in all the members of Christ, according to the measure of the grace of God in them. Man is born naked, he comes naked into this world, as if God defigned him for the picture of peace: and furely, when he is born again, he comes not into the new world of grace with claws to tear, a fword to wound, and a fire in his hand to burn up his fellow-members in Christ, because they cannot fee with his light. Oh! it is fad to fee Christ's lillies as thorns in one another's fide, Christ's lambs devouring one another like lions, and God's diamonds cutting one another: yet it must be remembered, that sin is no proper cement for the members of Christ, though Herod and Pontius Pilate may be made friends that way. The apostle's rule is plain, Heb. xii. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness. To follow peace no

further than our humour, credit, and selievers. State III. further than our humour, credit, and such like things will allow us, is too short: to pursue it farther than holiness, that is, conformity to the Divine will, allows us, is too far. Peace is precious, yet it may be bought too dear: wherefore we must rather want it, than purchase it at the expence of truth or holiness. But otherwise it cannot be over dear bought, and it will always

be precious in the eyes of the fons of peace.

II. And now, finners, what shall I say to you? I have given you some view of the privileges of those in the state of grace: you have seen them afar off. But alas! they are not yours, because you are not Christ's. The finfulness of an unregenerate state is yours; and the mifery of it is yours also: you have neither part nor lot in this matter. The guilt of all your fins lies upon you; you have no part in the righteousness of Christ. There is no peace to you, no peace with God, no true peace of conscience: for you have no saving interest in the great Peace-maker. You are none of God's family: the adoption we spoke of belongs not to you. You have no part in the Spirit of fanctification; and, in one word, you have no inheritance among them that are fanctified. All I can say to you in this matter, is, that the case is not desperate, they may yet be yours, Rev. iii. 20. Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man bear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will fup with him, and he with me. Heaven is proposing an union with earth still, the potter is making suit to his own clay, and the gates of the city of refuge are not yet closed. O that we could compel you to come in! Thus far of the state of grace.

S T A T E IV.

NAMELY,

The ETERNAL STATE, or State of confummate Happiness or Misery.

HEADI.

OF DEATH.

Job xxx. 23. For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

Come now to discourse of man's eternal state, into which he enters by death. Of this entrance Job takes a folemn ferious view, in the words of the text, which contain a general truth, and a particular application of it. The general truth is supposed, namely, that all men must, by death, remove out of this world; they must die. But whither must they go? They must go to the house appointed for all 'living; to the grave, that darksome, gloomy solitary house, in the land of forgetfulness. Wherever the body is laid up till the refurrection, thither, as to a dwelling-house, death brings us home. While we are in the body, we are but in a lodging-house; in an inn, on our way homeward. When we come to our grave, we come to our home, our long-home, Eccl. xii. 5. All living must be inhabitants of this house, good and bad, old and young. Man's life is a stream, running into death's devouring deeps. They who now live in palaces, must quit them, and go home to this house; and they who have not where to lay their heads, shall thus have a house at length. It is apppinted for all, by him whose counsel shall stand. This appointment cannot be shifted; it is a law, which mortals cannot transgress. Job's application of this general truth to himself, is expressed in these words; I know that thou wilt bring me to death, &c. Ha

knew that he must meet with death, that his soul and body must part; that God, who had set the time, would certainly see it kept. Sometimes Job was inviting death to come to him, and carry him home to its house; yea, he was in hazard of running to it before the time. Job vii. 15. My soul chooseth strangling and death, rather than my life. But here he considers, God would bring him to it, yea, bring him back to it, as the word imports. Whereby he seems to intimate, that we have no life in this world, but as run-aways from death, which stretcheth out its cold arms to receive us from the womb: but though we do then narrowly escape its clutches, we cannot escape long; we shall be brought back again to it. Job knew this; he had laid it down as fixed, and was looking for it.

DOCTRINE, All must die.

Although this doctrine be confirmed by the experience of all former generations, ever fince Abel entered into the house appointed for all living; and though the living know that they shall die; yet it is needful to discourse of the certainty of death, that it may be impressed on

the mind, and duly confidered.

Wherefore confider, first, There is an unalterable flatute of death, under which men are concluded. It is appointed unto men once to die, Heb. ix. 27. It is laid up for them, as parents lay up for their children: they may look for it, and cannot miss it; seeing God has designed and reserved it for them. There is no peradventure in it; we must needs die, 2 Sam. xiv. 14. Though fome men will not hear of death, yet every man must fee death, Pfal. lxxxix. 41. Death is a champion all must grapple with: we must enter the lists with it, and it will have the maftery. Eccl. viii. 8. There is no mán that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit, neither bath he power in the day of death. They indeed, who are found alive at Christ's coming, shall all be changed, 1 Cor. xv. 51. But that change will be equivalent to death, will answer the purposes of it. All other persons must go the common road, the way of all flesh. Secondly, Let us consult daily observation.

Every man feeth that wife men die, likewise the fool and brutish person, Psal. xlix. 10. There is room enough on this earth for us; notwithstanding the multitudes that were upon it before us: they are gone to make room for us; as we must depart to leave room for others. It is long fince death began to transport men into another world, and vast shoals or multitudes are gone thither already: yet the trade is going on still; death is carrying off new inhabitants daily, to the house appointed for all living. Who could ever hear the grave day, It is enough? Long has it been getting, but still it asketh. The world is like a great fair, or market, where some are coming in, others going out; while the affembly that is in it is confused, and the most part know not wherefore they are come together: or like a town fituated on the road to a great city, through which fome travellers have paffed, fome are passing, while others are only coming in, Eccl. i. 4. One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. Death is an inexorable, irrefistible meffenger; who cannot be diverted from executing his orders, by the force of the mighty, the bribes of the rich, the entreaties of the poor. It doth not reverence the hoary head, nor pity the harmless babe. The bold and daring cannot out-brave it; nor can the faint-hearted obtain a discharge in this war. Thirdly, The human body confifts of perishing principles, Gen. iii. 19. Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. The strongest are but brittle earthen vessels, easily broken in thivers. The foul is but meanly housed, while in this mortal body, which is not a house of stone, but a house of clay; the mud walls cannot but moulder away, especially seeing the foundation is not on a rock, but in the dust; they are crushed before the moth, though this infect be so tender, that the gentle touch of a finger will dispatch it, Job iv. 19. These principles are like gun-powder: a very small spark, lighting on them, will fet them on fire, and blow up the house. The stone of a raisin, or a hair in milk, have choaked men and laid the house of clay in the dust. If we consider the frame and structure of our bodies, how fearfully 286

and wonderfully we are made; and on how regular and exact a motion of the fluids, and balance of humours, our life depends; and that death hath as many doors to enter in by, as the body hath pores; and if we compare the foul and body together, we may justly reckon, there is somewhat more aftonishing in our life than in our death; and that it is more strange, to see dust walking up and down on the dust, than lying down in it. Though the lamp of our life be not violently blown out; yet the flame must go out at length, for want of oil. What are those distempers and diseases which we are liable to, but death's harbingers, that come to prepare his way? They meet us, as foon as we fet our foot on earth, to tell us, at our entry, that we do but come into the world to go out again. beit, fome are fnatched away in a moment, without being warned by fickness or disease. Fourtbly, We have finful fouls, and therefore have dying bodies: Death follows fin, as the shadow follows the body. The wicked must die, by virtue of the threatening of the covenant of works, Gen. ii. 17. In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. And the godly must die too; that as death entered by sin, sin may go out by death. Christ has taken away the sting of death, as to them; though he has not as yet removed death itself. Wherefore, though it fasten on them, as the viper did on Paul's hand, it shall do them no harm: but because the leprosy of sin is in the walls of the house, it must be broken down, and all the materials thereof carried forth. Laftly, Man's life in this world, according to the Scripture account of it, is but a few degrees removed from death. The Scripture represents it as a vain and empty thing, short in its continuance, and fwift in its passing away.

First, Man's life is a vain and empty thing while it is: it vanisheth away; and lo! it is not, Job vii. 6. My days are vanity. If you suspect afflicted Job of partiality in this matter, hear the wise and prosperous Solomon's character of the days of his life, Eccl. vii. 15. All things have I seen in the days of my vanity; i. e. my vain days. Moses, who was a very active man, com-

pares our days to a fleep, Pfal. xc. 5. They are as a fleep; which is not noticed till it be ended. The refemblance is put: few men have right apprehensions of life, until death awakens them: then we begin to know that we were living. We fpend our years as a tale that is told, ver. 9. When an idle tale is telling, it may affect a little; but when it is ended, it is forgot, and so is a man forgotten when the sable of his life is ended. It is as a dream, or vision of the night, in which there is nothing solid; when one awakes all vanisheth, Job xx. 8. He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found; yea, he shall be chased away, as a vision in the night. It is but a vain shew or image, Pfal. xxxix. 6. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew. Man, in this world, is but as it were a walking statue: his life is but an image of

life, there is so much of death in it.

If we look on our life, in the feveral periods of it, we Thall find it a heap of vanities. Childhood and youth are vanity, Eccl. xi. 10. We come into the world, the most helplefs of all animals; young birds and beafts can do fomething for themselves, but infant-man is altogether unable to help himself. Our childhood is spent in trifling pleafures, which become the fcorn of our afterthoughts. Youth is a flower that foon withereth; a bloffom that quickly falls off; it is a space of time in which we are rath, foolish, and inconsiderate, pleasing ourselves with a variety of vanities, and swimming, as it were, through a flood of them. But ere we are aware, it is past; and we are in middle age, encompassed with a thick cloud of cares, through which we must grope; and finding ourselves beset with pricking thorns of difficulties, through them we must force our way, to accomplish the projects and contrivances of our riper thoughts. The more we folace ourselves in any earthly enjoyment which we attain to, the more bitterness do we find in parting with it. Then comes old age, attended with its own train of infirmities, labour and forrow, Pfal. xc. 10. and fets us down next door to the grave. In a word, All flesh is grass, Isa. xl. 6. Every stage, or period of life, is vanity. Man at his best state (his middle age, when the heat of youth is spent, and

the forrows of old age have not yet overtaken him) is altogether vanity, Pfal. xxxix. 5. Death carries off some in the bud of childhood, others in the blossom of youth, and others when they are come to their fruit; few are left standing till, like ripe corn, they forsake the

ground: all die one time or other Secondly, Man's life is a short thing: it is not only a vanity, but a short-lived vanity. Consider, First, How the life of man is reckoned in the Scriptures. It was indeed sometimes reckoned by hundreds of years: but no man ever arrived at a thousand, which yet bears no proportion to eternity. Now, hundreds are brought down to scores; threescore and ten, or fourscore, is its utmost length, Psal. xc. 10. But few men arrive at that length of life. Death does but rarely wait till men be bowing down, by reason of age, to meet the grave. Yet, as if years were too big a word for fuch a small thing as the life of man on earth, we find it counted by months, Job xiv. 5. The number of his months are with thre. Our course, like that of the moon, is run in a little time; we are always waxing or waneing, till we disappear. But frequently it is reckoned by days; and these but few, Job xiv. 1. Man, that is born of a woman; is of few days. Nay, it is but one day in Scripture account; and that a hireling's day, who will precifely obferve when his day ends, and give over his work, ver. 6. Till be shall accomplish as an bireling his day. Yea, the Scripture brings it down to the shortest space of time, and calls it a moment, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Our light affliction (though it last all our life long) is but for a moment. Elsewhere it is brought down yet to a lower pitch, farther than which one cannot carry it, Psal. xxxix. 5. Mine age is as nothing before thee. Agreeable to this, Solomon tells us, Eccl. iii. 2. There is a time to be born, and a time to die; but makes no mention of a time to live, as if our life were but a skip from the womb to the grave. Secondly, Confider the various similitudes by which the Scripture represents the shortness of man's life. Hear Hezekiah, Ila. xxxviii. 12. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent; I have out off like a weaver my life. The shepherd's tent is soon

removed; for the flocks must not feed long in one place: fuch is a man's life on this earth, quickly gone. It is a web, which he is inceffantly working; he is not idle fo much as one moment: in a short time it is wrought, and then it is cut off. Every breathing is a thread in this web; when the last breath is drawn, the web is woven out; he expires, and then it is cut off, he breathes no more. Man is like grass, and like a flower, Isa. xl. 6. All flesh (even the strongest and most healthy flesh) is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the slower of the field. The grass is flourishing in the morning; but in the evening, being cut down by the mowers, it is withered. So man fometimes is walking up and down at ease in the morning, and in the evening is lying a corpse, being knocked down by a fudden stroke, with one or other of death's weapons. The flower, at best, is but a weak and tender thing, of short continuance, whereever it grows: but (observe) man is not compared to the flower of the garden; but to the flower of the field, which the foot of every beaft may tread down at any time. Thus is our life liable to a thousand accidents every day; any of which may cut us off. But though we should escape all these, yet at length this grass withereth, this flower fadeth of itself. It is carried off, as the cloud is confumed and vanisheth away, Job vii. 9. It looks big as the morning cloud, which promifeth great things, and raiseth the expectation of the husbandman: but the fun rifeth, and the cloud is scattered; death comes, and man vanisheth. The apostle James proposeth the question, What is your life? Chap. iv. 14. Hear his answer, It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. It is frail, uncertain, and lasteth not. It is as smoke, which goes out of the chimney, as if it would darken the face of the heavens; but quickly is scattered, and appears no more: thus goeth man's life, and where is he? It is a wind, Job vii. 7. O remember that my life is wind. It is but a passing blast, a short puff, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again, Pfal. lxxviii. 39. Our breath is in our nostrils, as if it were always upon the wing to depart: ever paffing and repassing like a traveller, until it be away, not to return till the heavens be no more.

Lastly, Man's life is a swift thing; not only a passing, but a flying vanity. Have you not observed how fwiftly a shadow hath run along the ground, in a cloudy and windy day, fuddenly darkening the places beautified before with the beams of the fun, but as fuddenly disappearing? Such is the life of man on earth; for he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not, Job xiv. 2. A weaver's shuttle is very swift in its motion; in a moment it is thrown from one fide of the web to the other: yet our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, ch. vii. 6.-How quickly is man toffed through time into eternity! see how Job describes the swiftness of the time of life. chap. ix. 25, 26. Now my days are swifter than a post; they flee away, they see no good. They are hasted away as the swift ships, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey. He compares his days with a post, a foot-post; a runner, who runs speedily to carry tidings, and will make no stay. But though the post were like Ahimaaz, who over-ran Cushi, our days would be swifter than he; for they flee away, like a man fleeing for his life, before the pursuing enemy; he runs with his utmost vigour, yet our days run as fast as he: yet this is not all; even he who is fleeing for his life cannot run always: he must needs sometimes stand still, lie down, or turn in some where, as Sisera did into Jael's tent, to refresh himself: but our time never halts. Therefore it is compared to ships, which can fail night and day without intermisfion, till they be at their port; and to swift ships, ships of defire, in which men quickly arrive at their defired haven; or ships of pleasure, that sail more swiftly than ships of burden. Yet the wind failing, the ship's course is marred: but our time always runs with a rapid courfe. Therefore it is compared to the eagle flying; not with his ordinary flight, for that is not fufficient to represent the swiftness of our days; but when he flies upon his prey, which is with an extraordinary fwiftness. And thus, even thus our days flee away.

Having thus discoursed of death, let us improve it, in discerning the vanity of the world, in bearing up, with Christian contentment and patience, under all troubles and difficulties in it, mortifying our lusts, in clear-

ing unto the Lord with full purpose of heart, on all

hazards, and in preparing for death's approach.

And first, Let us hence, as in a looking-glass, behold the vanity of the world, and of all those things in it which men so much value and esteem, and therefore fet their hearts upon. The rich and the poor, are equally intent upon this world; they bow the knee to it; yet it is but a clay-god; they court the bulky vanity, and run keenly to catch this shadow: the rich man is hugged to death in its embraces; and the poor man wearies himself in the fruitless pursuit. (What wonder if the world's smiles overcome us, when we pursue it so eagerly, even while it frowns upon us?) But look into the grave, O man! confider and be wife; liften to the doctrine of death; and learn, (1.) That hold as fast as thou canst, thou shalt be forced to let go thy hold of the world at length. Though thou load thyself with the fruits of this earth, yet all thall fall off, when thou comest to creep into thy hole, the house, under ground, appointed for all living. When death comes, you must bid an eternal farewell to thy enjoyments in this world: thou must leave thy goods to another; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? Luke xii. 20. (2.) Thy portion of these things shall be very little ere long. If thou lie down on the grafs, and stretch thyself at full length, and observe the print of thy body when thou rifest, thou mayest see how much of this earth will fall to thy share at last. It may be thou shalt get a cossin, and a winding-sheet; but thou art not fure of that: many, who have had abundance. of wealth, yet have not had fo much when they took up their new house in the land of silence. But however that be, more you cannot expect. It was a mortifying leffon Saladine, when dying, gave to his foldiers. He called for his standard-bearer, and ordered him to take his winding-sheet upon his pike, and go out to the camp with it, and tell them, That of all his conquests, victories, and triumphs, he had nothing now left him but that piece of linen to wrap his body in for burial. Lastly, This world is a false friend, who leaves a man in time of greatest need; and slees from him when

he has most to do. When thou art lying on a deathbed, all thy friends and relations cannot rescue thee; all thy substance cannot ransom thee; nor procure thee a reprieve for one day, nay, not for one hour. Yea, the more thou possesses of this world's goods, thy forrow at death is like to be the greater: for though one may live more commodiously in a palace than in a cottage, yet he may die more easily in the cottage, where he has

very little to make him fond of life.

Secondly, It may ferve as a store-house, for Christian contentment and patience, under worldly loffes and croffes. A close application of the doctrine of death, is an excellent remedy against fretting, and gives some ease to a troubled heart. When Job had fustained very great losses, he fat down contented, with this meditation, Job i. 21. Naked came I out of my mother's wonb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleffed be the name of the Lord. When providence brings a mortality or murrain among your cattle, how ready are you to fret and complain. the serious consideration of your own death (to which you have a notable help from fuch providential occurrences) may be of use to silence your complaints, and quiet your spirits. Look to the house appointed for all living, and learn, (1.) That you must abide a forer thrust than the loss of worldly goods. Do not cry out for a thrust in the leg or arm; for before long there will be a home-thrust at the heart. You may lose your dearest relations: the wife may lose her husband, and the husband his wife; and the parents may lose their dear children, and the children their parents: but if any of these trials happen to you, remember, you must lose your own life at last; and wherefore doth a living man complain? Lam. iii. 39. It is always profitable to confider, under affliction, that our case might have been worse than it is. Whatever be confumed, or taken from us, it is of the Lord's mercies that we ourselves are not confumed, ver. 22. (2.) It is but a short space of time that we are to be in this world. It is but a little that our necessities require in so short space of time: when death comes, we shall stand in

need of none of these things. Why should men rack their heads with cares how to provide for to-morrow; while they know not if they shall need any thing tomorrow. Though a man's provision for his journey. be near spent, he is not disquieted, if he thinks that he is near home. Are you working by candle-light, and is there little of your candle left? It may be there is as little fand in your glass; and if so, you have little use for it. (3.) You have matters of great weight, that challenge your care. Death is at the door, beware you lose not your souls. If blood breaks out at one part of the body, they generally open a vein in another part of it, to turn the stream of blood, and to stop it. Thus, the Spirit of God fometimes cures men of forrow for earthly things, by opening the heart-vein to bleed for fin. Did we purfue heavenly things the more vigorufly that our affairs in this life prosper not, we should thereby gain a double advantage. Our worldly forrow would be diverted, and our best treasure increafed. (4.) Crosses of this nature will not last long. The world's smiles and frowns will quickly be buried together in everlasting forgetfulness. Its smiles go away as the foam on the water: and its frowns are as a passing stitch in a man's side. Time slees away with fwift wings, and carries our earthly comforts, and croffes too, along with it: neither of them will accompany us into the house appointed for all living, Job iii. 17, 18, 19. There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest; there the prisoners rest together, they bear not the voice of the oppressor: the small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master. Cast a look into eternity, and you will see affliction here is but for a moment. The truth is, our time is so very short, that it will not allow either our joys or griefs to come to perfection. Wherefore, let them that weep be as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not, &c. 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. (5.) Death will put all men on a level. The king and the beggar must dwell in one house, when they come to their journey's end; though their entertainment by the way be very different. The small and the great

State IV. are there, Job iii. 19. We are all in this world as on a stage: it is no great matter whether a man act the part of a prince or a peafant; for when they have acted their parts, they must both get behind the curtain, and appear no more. Lastly, If thou be not in Christ, whatever thy afflictions now be, troubles a thousand times worse are abiding thee in another world. Death will turn thy croffes into pure unmixed curses: and then how gladly wouldst thou return to thy former afflicted state, and purchase it at any rate, were there any possibility of such a return? If thou be in Christ, thou mayest well bear thy cross. Death will put an end to all thy troubles. If a man on a journey be not well accommodated, where he lodgeth only for a night, he will not trouble himself much about the matter; because he is not to stay there, it is not his, home. You are on the road to eternity; let it not difquiet you that you meet with some hardships in the inn of this world. Fret not, because it is not so well with you as with some others. One man travels, with a cane in his hand; his fellow traveller (perhaps) has but a common staff, or stick : either of them will ferve the turn. It is no great matter which of them be yours; both will be laid aside when you come to your journey's end.

Thirdly, It may ferve for a bridle, to curb all manner of lusts, particularly those conversant about the body. A serious visit made to cold death, and that solitary mansion, the grave, might be of good use to repress

1/t, It may be of use to cause men to remit their inordinate care for the body; which is to many the bane of their fouls. Often do these questions, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And, Wherewithall shall we be clothed? leave no room for another of more importance, viz. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? The foul is put on the rack, to answer these mean questions, in favour of the body, while its own eternal interests are neglected. But, ah! why are men so busy to repair the ruinous cottage; leaving the inhabitant to bleed to death of his wounds, unheeded, unregarded! Why so much care for the body, to the neglecting of the concerns of the immortal foul? O be not fo anxious for what can only ferve your bodies; fince, ere long, the clods of cold earth will ferve

for back and belly too.

2dly, It may abate your pride on account of bodily endowments, which vain man is apt to glory in. Value not yourselves on the blossom of youth; for while you are in your blooming years, you are but ripening for a grave: death gives the fatal stroke, without asking any body's age. Glory not in your strength, it will quickly be gone: the time will foon be, when you shall not be able to turn yourselves on a bed; and you must be carried by your grieving friends to your long home. And what fignifies your healthful constitution? Death doth not always enter in foonest, where it begins soonest to knock at the door; but makes as great a dispatch with some in a few hours, as with others in many years. Value not yourfelves on your beauty, which shall confume in the grave, Pfal. xlix. 14. Remember the change which death makes on the fairest face, Job xiv. 20. Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him array. Death makes the greatest beauty so loathsome, that it must be buried out of fight. Could a looking glass be used, in the house appointed for all living, it would be a terror to those who now look oftener into their glasses than into their Bibles. And what though the body be gorgeously arrayed? The finest clothes are but badges of our fin and sname; and in a little time will be exchanged for a winding-sheet; when the body will become a feast to the worms.

3dly, It may be a check upon fenfuality and fleshly lusts, I Pet. ii. II. I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from steshly lusts, which war against the foul. It is hard to cause wet wood to take fire; and when the fire doth take hold of it, it is foon extinguished. Senfuality makes men most unfit for divine communications, and is an effectual means to quench the Spirit. Intemperance in eating and drinking carries on the ruin of foul and body at once; and hastens death, while it makes the man most unmeet for it. Therefore, take heed to pour. felves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and so that day come upon you unawares, Luke xxi. 34. But O how often is the soul struck through with a dart, in gratifying the senses! At these doors destruction enters in. Therefore Job made a covenant with his eyes, chap. xxxi. 1. The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein, Prov. xxii. 14. Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall. Beware of lasciviousness; study modesty in your apparel, words, and actions. The ravens of the valley of death will at length pick out the wanton eye: the obscene silthy tongue will at length be quiet in the land of silence: and grim death, embracing the body in its cold arms, will effectually

allay the heat of all fleshly lusts.

Lastly, In a word: it may check our earthly-mindedness; and at once knock down the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Ah! if we must die, why are we thus? why so fond of temporal things; fo anxious to get them, fo eager in the embraces of them, fo mightily touched with the loss of them? Let me, upon a view of the house appointed for all living, bespeak the worldling in the words of Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 5. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings, they flee away as an eagle towards beaven. Riches, and all worldly things, are but a fair nothing: they are that which is not. They are not what they feem to be; they are all but gilded vanities, that deceive the eye. Comparatively they are not; there is infinitely more of nothingness and not-being, than of being or reality in the best of them. What is the world, and all that is in it, but a fashion, or fair show, such as men make on a stage, a passing show? 1 Cor. vii. 31. Royal pomp is but a gaudy show, or appearance, in God's account, Acts xxv. 23. The best name they get is good things: but observe it, they are only the wicked man's good things; Lake xvi. 25. Thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, fays Abraham, in the parable of the rich man in hell. Well may the men of the world call these things their goods; for there is no

other good in them, about them, nor attending them. Now, wilt thou fet thine eyes upon empty shows and fancies? wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly on them, as the word is? shall men's hearts fly out at their eyes upon them, as a ravenous bird on its prey? if they do, let them know, that at length these shall flee as fast away from them, as ever their eyes flew upon them: like a flock of fair feathered birds, that fettle on a fool's ground; the which, when he runs to catch them as his own, do immediately take wing, fly away, and, fitting down on his neighbour's ground, illude his expectation, Luke xii. 20. Thou fool, this night thy foul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be? Though you do not make wings to them, as many do; they make themselves wings, and sly away: not as a tame house-bird, which may be caught again; nor as an hawk, that will show where she is by her bells, and be called again with the lure: but as an eagle, which quickly flies out of fight, and cannot be recalled. Forbear thou to behold these things. O mortal! there is no reason thou should set thine eyes upon them. This world is a great inn, in the road to eterhity, to which thou art travelling. Thou art attended by these things, as servants belonging to the inn, where thou lodgest; they wait upon thee while thou art there; and when thou goest away, they will convoy thee to the door. But they are notthine, they will not go away with thee; but return to wait on other strangers, as they did on thee:

Fifthly, It may serve as a spring of Christian resolution, to cleave to Christ, adhere to his truths, and continue in his ways, whatever we may suffer for so doing. It would much allay the fear of man, that bringeth a snare. Who art thou, that thou shoulds be afraid of a man that shall die! Isa. li. 12. Look on perfecutors as pieces of brittle clay, that shall be dashed in pieces; for then shall you despise them as soes that are mortal, whose terror to others in the land of the living, shall quickly die with themselves. The serious consideration of the shortness of our time, and the certainty of death, will teach us, that all the advantage which we can make by

our apostacy, in time of trial, is not worth the while; it is not worth going out of our way to get it: and what we refuse to forgo for Christ's sake, may quickly be taken from us by death. But we can never lose it fo honourably, as for the cause of Christ and his gospel: for what glory is it that you give up what you have in the world; when God takes it from you by death, whether you will or not? This confideration may teach us to undervalue life itself, and choose to forgo it rather than to fin. The worst that men can do, is to take away that life which we cannot long keep, though all the world should conspire to help us to retain the spirit. If we refuse to offer it up to God, when he calls for it in defence of his honour, he can take it from us another way; as it fared with him, who could not burn for Christ, but was afterwards burnt by an accidental fire in his house.

Lastly, It may serve for a spur to incite us to prepare for death. Consider, (1.) Your eternal state will be according to the state in which you die: death will open the doors of heaven or hell to you. As the tree falls, fo it shall lie through eternity. If the infant be deadborn, the open world will not raise it to life again: and if one die out of Christ, in an unregenerate state, there is no more hope of him for ever. (2.) Seriously confider what it is to go into another world; a world of spirits, wherewith we are very little acquainted. How frightful is converse with spirits to poor mortals in this life! And how dreadful is the case, when men are hurried away into another world, not knowing but devils may be their companions for ever! Let us then give all diligence to make and advance our acquaintance with the Lord of that world. (3.) It is but a short time which you have to prepare for death: therefore now or never, feeing the time affigned for preparation will foon be over. Eccl. ix. 10. Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goeft. How can we be idle, having so great a work to do, and so little time to do it in? But if the time be short, the work of preparation for death,

though hard work, will not last long. The shadows of the evening make the labourer work chearfully, knowing the time to be at hand when he will be called in from his labour. (4.) Much of our short time is over already; and the youngest of us all cannot assure himself that there is as much of his time to come as is past. Our life in the world is but a short preface to long eternity; and much of the tale is told. Oh! shall we not double our diligence, when so much of our time is spent, and so little of our great work is done? (5.) The prefent time is flying away; and we cannot bring back time past, it hath taken an eternal farewell of us; there is no kindling the fire again that is burnt to ashes. The time to come is not ours; and we have no affurance of a share in it, when it comes. We have nothing we can call ours but the present moment; and that is flying away. How foon our time may be at an end we know not. Die we must, but who can tell us when? If death kept one fet time for all, we were in no hazard of a furprize: but daily observation fhews us, that there is no fuch thing. Now the flying lhadow of our life allows no time for loitering. The rivers run speedily into the sea, from whence they came; but not so speedily as man to the dust from whence he came. The stream of time is the swiftest current, and quickly runs out to eternity. Lastly, If once death carry us off, there is no coming back again to mend our matters, Job xiv. 14. If a man die, shall he live again? Dying is a thing we cannot get a trial of; it is what we can only do once, Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed unto men once to die. And that which can be but once done, and yet is of so much importance, that our all depends in our doing it right, we have need to use the utmost diligence, that we may do it well. Therefore prepare for death.

If you who are unregenerate ask me, what you shall do to prepare for death, that you may die safely? I answer, I have told you already what must be done. Your nature and state must be changed; you must be born again; you must be united to Jesus Christ by faith. Till this is done, you are not capable of other

directions, which belong to a person's dying comfortably; whereof we may discourse afterwards, in the due place.

HEAD II.

The Difference between the RIGHTEOUS and the WICKED in their Death.

Prov. xiv. 32. The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.

THIS text looks like the cloud between the Israelites and Egyptians; having a dark side towards
the latter, and a bright side towards the former. It
represents death like Pharaoh's jaylor, bringing the
chief butler and the chief baker out of prison; the one
to be restored to his office, and the other to be led to
execution. It shews the difference between the godly
and ungodly in their death; who, as they act a very different part in life, so in death have a very different exit.

First, As to the death of a wicked man, here is, (1.) The manner of his paffing out of the world: he is driven away; namely, in his death, as is clear from the opposite clause. He is forcibly thrust out of his place in this world; driven away as chass before the wind. (2.) The state he passeth away in: he dies in a finful and hopeless state. First, In a finful state; he is driven away in bis wickedness. He lived in it, and he dies in it: his filthy garments of fin, in which he wrapped up himself in his life, are his prison garments, in which he shall lie wrapped up for ever. Secondly, In a hopeless state; but the righteous hath hope in his death: which plainly imports the hopeleffness of the wicked in their death. Whereby is not meant, that no wicked man shall have any hope at all when he is dying, but shall die in despair. No: sometimes it is so indeed; but frequently it is otherwise: foolish virgins may, and often do hope to the last breath. But the wicked man has no folid hope: as for the delusive hopes which he entertains himself with, death will root them up:

and he shall be for ever irretrivably miserable.

Secondly, As to the death of a righteous man, he hath hope in his death. This is ulhered in with a but, importing a removal of these dreadful circumstances, with which the wicked man is attended, who is driven away in his wickedness: but the godly are not so. Not so, (1.) In the manner of their passing out of the world. The righteous are not driven away, as chaff before the wind, but led away as a bride to the marriage chamber, carried away by the angels unto Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22. (2.) Not so as to their state, when passing out of this life. The righteous man dies, (1.) Not in a sinful, but in a holy state. He goes not away in his fin, but out of it. In his life he was putting off the old man, changing his prison garments: and now the remaining rags of them are removed, and he is adorned with robes of glory. (2.) Not in a hopeless, but a hopeful state. He hath hope in his death: he has the grace of hope, and the well-founded expectation of better things than ever he had in this world: and though the stream of his hope at death may run shallow, yet he has still as much of it as makes him venture his eternal interests upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

DOCT. I. The Wicked dying, are driven away in their Wickedness, and in a hopeless State.

In speaking to this doctrine, (1.) I shall shew how, and in what sense, the wicked are driven away in their wickedness at death. (2.) I shall discover the hopeless-ness of their state at death. And, lastly, apply the whole.

I. How, and in what fense the wicked are driven away in their wickedness. In discoursing of this matter, I shall briefly enquire, (1.) What is meant by their being driven away. (2.) Whence they shall be driven, and whither. (3.) In what respects they may be said to be driven away in their wickedness. But before I proceed, let me remark, that you are mistaken, if you think that no persons are to be called wicked, but they who are avowedly vitious and prosane; as if the devil could

dwell in none, but those whose name is legion. In Scripture account, all who are not righteous, in the manner hereafter explained, are reckoned wicked. Therefore the text divides the whole world into two forts, the righteous and the wicked; and you will fee the fame thing in Mal. iii. 18. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked. Wherefore, if you be not righteous, you are wicked. If you have not an imputed righteousness, and also an implanted righteousness and holiness; if you be yet in your natural flate, unregenerated, not united to Christ by faith, however moral, and blameless in the eyes of men your convertation may be, you are the wicked, who shall be driven away in their wickedness, if death finds you in that state. Now,

FIRST, As to the meaning of this phrase, driven away; there are three things in it; the wicked shall be taken

away fuddenly, violently, and irrefiftibly.

First, Unrenewed men shall be taken away suddenly at death. Not that all wicked men die suddenly; nor that they are all wicked that die fo; God forbid! but, (1.) Death commonly comes upon them unexpectedly, and fo furprifeth them; as the deluge furprifed the old world, though they were forewarned of it long before it came: and as travail cometh on a woman with child, with furprifing fuddenness, although looked for and expected, 1 Thess. v. 3. Death seizeth them, as a creditor doth his debtor, to hale him to prison, Psalm iv. 15. and that when they are not aware. Death comes in, as a thief, at the window, and finds them full of buly thoughts about this life, which that very day perish. (2.) Death always seizeth them unprepared for it: the old house falls down about their ears, before they have another provided. When death casts them to the door, they have not where to lay their heads; unless it be on a bed of fire and brimstone. The foul and body are as it were hugging one another in mutual embraces; when death comes like a whirlwind, and separates them. (3.) Death hurries them away in a moment to destruction, and makes a most dismal change: the man for the most part, never

knows where he is, till in hell he lift up his eyes, Luke xvi. 23. The floods of wrath suddenly overwhelm his foul; and ere he is aware, he is plunged into the box-

tomless pit.

Secondly, The unrenewed man is taken away out of the world violently. Driving is a violent action; he is chased out of the world, Job xviii. 18. Fain would he stay if he could; but death drags him away, like a malefactor to the execution. He sought no other portion than the profit and pleasures of this world; he hath no other, he really desires no other: how can he then go

away out of it, if he were not driven?

QUEST. But may not a wicked man be willing to die? Answ. He may indeed be willing to die; but, observe, it is only in one of three cases; (1.) In a fit of passion, by reason of some trouble, that he is impatient to be rid of. Thus many persons, when their passion has got the better of their reason; and when, on that account, they are most unfit to die, will be ready to cry, O to be gone! But should their desire be granted, and death come at their call, they would quickly shew, they were not in earnest; and that, if they go, they must be driven away against their wills. (2.) When they are brim-full of despair, they may be willing to die. Thus Saul murdered himself; and Spira wished to be in hell, that he might know the uttermost of what he believed he was to suffer. In this manner, men may seek after death, while it flees from them. But fearful is the violence which these undergo, whom the terrors of God do thus drive. (3.) When they are dreaming of happiness after death. Foolish virgins, under the power of delusion, as to their state, may be willing to die, having no fear of lying down in forrow. How many are there, who can give no Scripture-ground for their hope, who yet have no bands in their death! many are driven to darkness fleeping; they go off like lambs, who would roar like lions, did they but know what place they are going to: though the chariot, in which they are, drive furioufly to the deeps of hell, yet they fear not, because they are fast asleep.

Lastly, The unregenerate man is taken away irresistibly. He must go, though fore against his will. Death will take no refusal, nor admit of any delay, though the man has not lived half his days, according to his own computation. If he will not bow, it will break him. If he will not come forth, it will pull the house down about his ears; for there he must not stay. Although the physician lielp, friends groan, the wife and children cry, and the man himself use his utmost efforts to retain the spirit, his soul is required of him, yield he must, and go where he shall never more see light.

Secondly, Let us confider, whence they are driven, and whither. When the wicked die, (1.) They are driven out of this world, where they finned, into the other world, where they must be judged, and receive their particular fentences, Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. They shall no more return to their beloved earth. Though their hearts are wedded to their earthly enjoyments, they must leave them, they can carry nothing hence. How forrowful must their departure be, when they have nothing in view fo good as that which they leave behind them! (2.) They are driven out of the fociety of the faints on earth, into the fociety of the damned in hell, Luke xvi. 22, 23. The rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lift up his eyes. What a multitude of the devil's goats, now take their place among Christ's sheep! but at death they shall be led forth with the workers of iniquity, Pfal. cxxv. 5. There is a mixed multitude in this world, but no mixture in the other; each party is there fet by themselves. Though hypocrites grow here, as tares among the wheat, death willroot them up; and they shall be bound in bundles for the fire. (3.) They are driven out of time into eternity. While time lasts with them, there is hope; but when time goes, all hope goes with it. Precious time is now lavishingly spent: it lies so heavy on the hands of many, that they think themselves obliged to take several ways to drive away time. But beware of being at a loss what to do in life: improve time for eternity, whilft you have it; for ere long death will drive it from you, and you from it, so as you shall never meet again. (4.) They are driven out of their specious pretences to piety. Death strips them of the splendid robes of a fair Head II. of the Righteous and the Wicked.

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profession, with which some of them are adorned, and turns them off the stage, in the rags of a wicked heart and life. The word Hypocrite properly fignifies a stage player, who appears to be what indeed he is not. This world is the stage, on which these children of the devil personate the children of God. Their shew of religion is the player's coat, under which a person must look, who will judge of them aright. Death turns them out of their coat, and they appear in their native dress: it unveils them, and takes off their mask. There is none in the other world who pretend to be better than they really are. Depraved nature acts in the regions of horror undifguised. Lastly, They are driven away from all means of grace; and are let beyond the line, quite out of all prospect of mercy. There is no more an opportunity to buy oil for the lamp; it is gone out at death, and can never be lighted again. There may be offers of mercy and peace made after they are gone; but they are to others, not to them: there are no offers in the place to which they are driven; these offers are only made in that place from which they are driven away.

LASTLY, In what respects may they be said to be driven away in their wickedness? Answer, (1.) In respect of their being driven away in their sinful unconverted state. Having lived enemies to God, they die in a state of enmity to him: for none is brought into the eternal state of consummate happiness, but by the way of the state of grace in this life. The child that is dead in the womb, is born dead, and is cast out of the womb into the grave: so he who is dead while he liveth, or is spiritually dead, is cast forth of the womb of time, in the same state of death, into the pit of utter misery. O miserable death, to die in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity! it had been incomparably better for fuch as die thus, that they had never been born. (2.) In regard that they die finning, acting wickedly against God, in contradiction to the divine law: for they can do nothing but fin while they live. So death takes them in the very act of finning; violently draws them from the embraces of their lusts, and drives

them away to the tribunal to receive their sentence. It is a remarkable expression, Job xxvi. 14. They die in youth: the marginal reading is, their foul dieth in youth: their lusts being lively, their desires vigorous, and expectations big, as is common in youth. And their life is among the unclean; or, and the company, (or herd) of them dieth among the Sodomites, i. e. is taken away in the heat of their fin and wickedness, as the Sodomites were, Gen. xix. Luke vii. 28, 29. (3.) As they are driven away loaded with the guilt of all their fins: this is the winding-sheet, that shall lie down with them in the dust, Job xx. 11. Their works follow them into the other world: they go away with the yoke of their transgressions wreathed about their necks. Guilt is a bad companion in life, but how terrible will it be in death! It lies now, perhaps, like cold brimstone on their benumbed consciences; but when death opens the way for sparks of divine vengeance, like fire, to fall upon it, it will make dreadful flames in the confcience, in which the foul will be as it were wrapped up for ever. Lastly, The wicked are driven away in their wickedness, for they die under the absolute power of their wickedness. While there is hope, there is fome restraint on the worst of men: those moral endowments, which God gives to a number of men, for the benefit of mankind in this life, are so many restraints upon the imperious wickedness of human nature. But all hope being cut off, and those gifts withdrawn, the wickedness of the wicked will then arrive at its perfection. As the feeds of grace, fown in the hearts of the elect, come to their full maturity at death; 'fo wicked and hellish dispositions, in the reprobate, come then to their highest pitch. Their prayers to God will then be turned to horrible curses; and their praises to hideous blasphemies, Matth. xxii. 13. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This gives a difinal but genuine view of the state of the wicked in another world.

II. I shall discover the hopelessness of the state of unrenewed men at death. It appears to be very hopeless, if we consider these four things: First, Death cuts off their hopes and prospects of peace and pleasure in this life, Luke xii. 19, 20. Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? They look for great matters in this world, they hope to increase their wealth, to see their samilies prosper, and to live at ease; but death comes like a stormy wind, and shakes off all their fond hopes, like green fruit from off a tree. When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his world upon him, Job xx. 23. He may begin a web of contrivances, for advancing his worldly interest; but before he gets it wrought out, death comes and cuts it out. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth: inthat very day his thoughts period.

rish, Psal. cxlvi. 4.

Secondly, When death comes, they have no folid ground to hope for eternal happiness. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his foul? Job xxvii. 8. Whatever hopes they fondly entertain, they are not founded on God's word, which is the only fure ground of hope; if they knew their own case, they would see themselves only happy in a dream. And indeed what hope can they have? The law is plain against them, and condemns them. The curses of it (those cords of death) are about them already. The Saviour, whom they flighted, is now their judge; and their judge is their enemy. How then can they hope? They have bolted the door of mercy against themselves, by their unbelief. They have despised the remedy, and therefore must die without mercy. They have no faving interest in Jesus Christ, the only channel of conveyance through which mercy flows; and therefore they can never taste it. The fword of justice guards the door of mercy, so as none can enter in but the members of the mystical body of Christ, over whose head is a cover of atoning blood, the Mediator's blood. These indeed may pass without harm, for justice has nothing to require of them. But others cannot pass, since they are not in

Christ: death comes to them with the sting in it, the sting of unpardoned guilt. It is armed against them with all the force which the fanction of an holy law can give it, 1 Cor. xv. 56. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. When that law was given in Sinai, the whole mount quaked greatly, Exod. xix. 18. When the Redeemer was making fatisfaction for the elect's breaking it, the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, Matt. xxvii. 51. What possible ground of hope, then, is there to the wicked man, when death comes upon him, armed with the force of this law? How can he escape that fire, which burnt into the midst of heaven? Deut. iv. 11. How shall he be able to stand in that smoke, that ascended as the smoke of a furnace? Exod. xix. 18. How will he endure the terrible thunders and lightnings, ver. 19. and dwell in the darkness, clouds and thick darkness? Deut. iv. 11. resemblances, heaped together, do but faintly represent the fearful tempest of wrath and indignation, which shall pursue the wicked to the lowest hell; and for ever abide on them, who are driven to darkness at death.

Thirdly, Death roots up their delusive hopes of eternal happiness; then it is that their covenant with death, and agreement with hell, is broken. They are awakened out of their golden dreams, and at length lift up their eyes; Job viii. 14. Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. They trust that all will be well with them after death. But their trust is but a web woven out of their own bowels, with a great deal of art and industry. They wrap themselves up in their hope, as the spider wraps herself in her web. But it is a weak and slender defence; for however it may whithstand the threatenings of the word of God, death, that before of destruction, will fweep them and it both away, so as there shall not be the least shred of it left; and he, who this moment will not let his hope go, will next moment be utterly hopeless. Death overturns the house built on the fand; it leaves no man under the power of delufion.

Lastly, Death makes their state absolutely and for ever hopeless. Matters cannot be retrieved and amended

after death. For, (1.) Time once gone can never be recalled. If cries or tears, price or pains, could bring time back again, the wicked man might have hope in his death. But tears of blood will not prevail; nor will his roaring for millions of ages cause it to return. The fun will not stand still, for the fluggard to awake, and enter on his journey; and when once it is gone down, he cannot expect the night to be turned into day for his fake: he must lodge through the long night of eternity, where his time left him. (2.) There is no returning to this life, to amend what is amiss; it is a state of probation and trial, which terminates at death, therefore we cannot return to it again; it is but once that we thus live, and once that we die. Death carries the wicked man to his own place, Acts i. 25. This life is our working day: death closeth our day and our work together. We may readily admit that the wicked might have some hope in their death, if, after death has opened their eyes, they could return to life, and have but the trial of one Sabbath, one offer of Christ, one day, or but one hour more, to make up their peace with God: but man lieth down, and rifeth not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep, Job xiv. 12. Lastly, In the other world men have no access to get their ruined state and condition retrieved, though ever fo defirous of it. For there is no work nor device, no knowledge nor wildom in the grave, whither thou goest, Eccl. ix. 10. Now a man may flee from the wrath to come; he may get into a refuge; but when once death has done its work, the door is flut; there are no more offers of mercy, no more pardons; where the tree falls there it must lie.

Let what has been faid be carefully pondered, and

that it may be of use, let me exhort you,

First, To take heed that you entertain no hopes of heaven, but what are built on a solid foundation; tremble to think what fair hopes of happiness death sweeps away like cob-webs; how the hopes of many are cut off, when they seem to themselves to be at the very threshold of heaven; how, in the moment they expected to be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, into

the regions of bliss and peace, they are carried by devils into the fociety of the damned in hell, into the place of torment, and regions of horror. I befeech you beware, (1.) Of a hope built on ground that was never cleared. The wife builder digged deep, Luke vi. 43. Were your hopes of heaven never shaken; but have you had good hopes all your days? Alas for it! you may fee the mystery of your case explained, Luke xi. 21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. But if they have been shaken, take heed lest some breaches only have been made in the old building, which you have got repaired again, by ways and means of your own. I affure you, that your hope (however fair a building it is) is not to be trufted to, unless your old hopes have been razed, and you have built on a foundation quite new. (2.) Beware of that hope, which looks brisk in the dark, but loseth all its lustre when it is set in the light of God's word, when it is examined and tried by the touchstone of Divine revelation, John iii. 20, 21. For every one that doth evil, hateth the light; neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doth the truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are zerought in God. That hope which cannot abide Scripture-trial, but finks when fearched into by facred truth, is a delufion, and not a true hope: for God's word is always a friend to the graces of God's Spirit, and an enemy to delusion. (3.) Beware of that hope which stands without being supported by Scripture-evidences. Alas! many are big with hopes, who cannot give, because they really have not any, Scripture-grounds for them. Thou hopeft that all will be well with thee after death: but what word of God is it on which thou hast been caused to hope? Psal. cxix. 49. What Scriptureevidence hast thou to prove that thy hope is not the hope of the hypocrite? What hast thou, after impartial selfexamination, as in the fight of God, found in thyfelf, which the word of God determines to be a fure evidence of his right to eternal life, who is possessed of it? Numbers are ruined with fuch hopes as stand unsupported by Scripture evidence. Men are fond and tenacious

of these hopes; but death will throw them down, and leave the self-deceiver hopeless. Lastly, Beware of that hope of heaven, which doth not prepare and difpose you for heaven, which never makes your soul more holy, I John iii. 3. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. The hope of the most part of men, is rather a hope to be free of pain and torment in another life, than a hope of true happiness, the nature whereof is not understood and discerned: therefore it rests in sloth and indolence, and does not excite to mortification, and a heavenly life. So far are they from hoping aright for heaven, that they must own, if they speak their genuine sentiments, removing out of this world into any other place whatever, is rather their fear than their hope. The glory of the heavenly city does not at all draw their hearts upwards to it; nor do they lift up their heads with joy, in the prospect of arriving at it. If they had the true hope of the marriage day, they would, as the bride, the Lamb's wife, be making themselves ready for it, Rev. xix. 7. But their hopes are produced by their sloth, and their sloth is nourished by their hopes. Oh, firs, as you would not be driven away hopeless in your death, beware of these hopes! raze them now, and build on a new foundation, lest death leave not one stone of them upon another, and you never be able to hope any more.

Secondly, Hasten, O sinners, out of your wickedness, out of your sinful state, and out of your wicked life, if you would not at death be driven away in your wickedness. Remember the fatal end of the wicked man, as the text represents it. I know there is a great difference, in the death of the wicked, in respect of some circumstances: but all of them, in their death, agree in this, that they are driven away in their wickedness. Some of them die resolutely, as if they scorned to be asraid. Some in raging despair, so filled with horror, that they cry out, as if they were already in hell: others in sullent despondency, oppressed with scars, so that their hearts sink within them, on the remembrance of missipent time, and the view which they have of eternity, having nei-

ther head nor heart to do any thing for their own relief. And others die stupid: they lived like beasts, and they die like beafts, without any concern on their spirits about their eternal state. They groan under their bodily diffress, but have no sense of the danger of their fouls. One may, with almost as much prospect of succefs, speak to a stone, as speak to them: vain is the attempt to teach them; nothing that can be faid moves them. To discourse to them, either of the joys of heaven, or the torments of hell, is to plough on a rock, or beat the air. Some die like the foolish virgins, dreaming of heaven: their foreheads are steeled against the fears of hell, with prefumptuous hopes of heaven. Their business, who would be useful to them, is not to answer doubts about the case of their souls, but to dispute them out of their false hopes. But which way soever the unconverted man dies, he is driven away in his wickedness. O dreadful case! Oh! let the consideration of fo horrible a departure out of this world, move you to fiee to Jesus Christ, as the all-sufficient Saviour, and almighty Redeemer. Let it prevail to drive you out of your wickedness, to holiness of heart and life. Though you reckon it pleasant to live in wickedness, yet you cannot but own that it is bitter to die in it: if you leave it not in time, you must go in your wickedness to hell, the proper place of it, that it may be fet there on its own bale. For when you are passing out of this world, all your fins, from the eldest to the youngest of them, will swarm about you, hang upon you, accompany you to the other world, and as so many furies surround you there for ever.

Lafily, O be concerned for others, especially for your relations, that they may not continue in their sinful natural state, but be brought into a state of salvation; lest they be driven away in their wickedness at death. What would you not do to prevent any of your friends dying an untimely and violent death? But, alas! do not you see them in hazard of being driven away in their wickedness? is not death approaching them, even the youngest of them? and are they not strangers to true Christianity, remaining in that state in which they came

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into the world? Oh! make haste to pluck the brand out of the fire, before it be burned to ashes. The death of relations often leaves a sting in the hearts of those they leave behind them, because they did not do for their souls as they had opportunity; and because the opportunity is for ever taken out of their hands.

DOCT. II. The State of the Godly, in Death, is a hope-ful State.

We have feen the dark fide of the cloud, looking towards ungodly men, passing out of the world: let us now take a view of the bright fide of it, shining on the godly, as they enter on their eternal state. In discourling on this subject, I shall confirm this doctrine, answer an objection against it, and then make some practical improvement of the whole.

For confirmation, let it be observed, that although the passage, out of this world by death, hath a frightful aspect to poor mortals, and to miscarry in it must needs be of stal consequence, yet the following circumstances make the state of the godly, in their death,

happy and hopeful.

First, They have a trusty good Friend before them in the other world. Jesus Christ, their best Friend, is Lord of that land, to which death carries them. When Joséph sent for his father to come down to him to. Egypt, telling him, that God had made him lord over all Egypt, Gen. xlv. 9. and facob faw the waggons fofeph bad fent to carry him, the spirit of facob revived, ver. 27. He resolves to undertake the journey. I think, when the Lord calls a godly man out of this world, he fends him fuch glad tidings, and fuch a kind invitation into the other world, that if he had faith to believe it, his spirit must revive, when he sees the waggon of death, which comes to carry him thither. It is true indeed, he has a weighty trial to undergo, after death the judgment. But the case of the godly is altogether hopeful; for the Lord of the land is their Husband, and their Husband is the Judge: The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, John v. 22. Surely the case of the wife is hopeful, when her own husband is her judge,

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even fuch a husband as hates putting away. No hufband is so loving and so tender of his spouse, as the Lord Christ is of his. One would think it would be a very bad land, which a wife would not willingly go to, where her hufband is the ruler and judge. Moreover, their judge is the advocate, 1 John ii. 1. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Therefore they need not fear their being put back, and falling into condemnation. What can be more favourable? Can they think, that he who pleads their cause, will himself pass sentence against them? Yet, further, their Advocate is their Redeemer; they are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. So when he pleads for them, he is pleading his own cause. Though an advocate may be careless of the interest of one who emyloys him, yet furely he will do his utmost to defend his own right, which he hath purchased with his money: and shall not their advocate defend the purchase of his own blood? But more than all that, their Redeemer is their Head, and they are his members, Eph. v. 23. 30. Though one were fo filly as to let his own purchase go, without standing up to defend his right, yet furely he will not quit a limb of his own body. Is not their case then hopeful in death, who are fo closely linked and allied to the Lord of the other world, who hath the keys of hell and of death?

Secondly, They shall have a safe passage to another world. They must indeed go through the valley of the shadow of death: but though it be in itself a dark and shady vale, it shall be a valley of hope to them: they shall not be driven through it, but walk through it; as men in perfect safety, who fear no evil, Psal. xxiii. 4. Why should they fear? They have the Lord of the land's safe conduct, his pass sealed with his own blood; namely, the blessed covenant, which is the saints deathbed comfort, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. Who then can harm them? It is safe riding in Christ's chariot, (Cant. ii. 9.) both through life and death. They

have good and honourable attendants, a guard, even a guard of angels. These encamp about them in the time of their life; and surely will not leave them in the day of their death. These happy ministering spirits are attendants on their Lord's bride, and will doubtless convey her safe home to his house. When friends, in mournful mood, stand by the saints bed-side, waiting to see him draw his last breath, his soul is waited for by holy angels, to be carried by them into Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22. The Captain of the saints salvation is the Captain of this holy guard: he was their guide even unto death, and he will be their guide through it too, Psal. xxiii. 4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me. They may without fear pass that river, being consident it shall not overslow them; and they may walk through that fire, being sure they shall

not be burnt by it.

Death can do them no harm. It cannot even hurt their bodies: for though it separate the foul from the body, it cannot separate the body from the Lord Christ. Even death is to them but fleep in Jesus, 1 Thes. iv. 14. They continue members of Christ, though in a grave. Their dust is precious dust; laid up in the grave, as in their Lord's cabinet. They lie in a grave mellowing; as precious fruit laid up to be brought forth to him at the refurrection. The husbandman has corn in his barn, and corn lying in the ground: the latter is more precious to him than the former; because he looks to get it returned with increase. Even so the dead bodies of the faints are valued by their Saviour: they are fown in corruption, to be raised in incorruption; sown in dishonour, to be raifed in glory, I Cor. xv. 42, 43. It cannot hurt their fouls. It is with the fouls of the faints at death, as with Paul and his company in their voyage, whereof you have the history, Acts xxvii. The ship was broke in pieces, but the passengers got all safe to land. When the dying saint's speech is stopped, his eyes set, and his last breath drawn, the soul gets safe away into the heavenly paradife, leaving the body to return to its earth, but in the joyful hope of a re-union

at its glorious resurrection. How can death hurt the godly? It is a foiled enemy: if it cast them down, it is only that they may rife up more glorious. Our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death, 2 Tim i. 10. the foul and life of it is gone: it is but a walking shade, that may fright, but cannot hurt faints: it is only the shadow of death to them; it is not the thing itfelf: their dying is but as dying, or somewhat like dying. The apostle tells us, It is Christ that died, Rom. viii. 34. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, though stoned to death, yet only fell asleep, Acts vii. 60. Certainly, the nature of death is quite changed, with respect to the saints. It is not to them what it was to Jesus Christ their Head: it is not the venomed ruinating thing, wrapt up in the fanction of the first covenant, Gen. ii 17. In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. It comes to the godly without its sting: they may meet it with that salutation, O death, where is thy fling! Is this Mara! is this bitter death! It went out full into the world, when the first Adam opened the door to it! but the fecond Adam hath brought it again empty to his own people. I feel a sting, may the dying saint fay; yet it is but a bee-sting, stinging only through the fkin: but, O death, where is thy fting, thine old fling, the ferpent's fling, that flings to the heart and foul? The sting of death is sin: but that is taken away. If death arrests the faint, and carries him before the judge, to answer for the debt he contracted, the debt will be found paid by the glorious Surety; and he has the discharge to show. The thorn of guilt is pulled cut of the man's conscience; and his name is blotted out-of the black roll, and written among the living in Jerusalem. It is true, it is a great journey to go through the valley of the shadow of death; but the saint's burden is taken away from his back, his iniquity is pardoned, he may walk at ease; no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beaft: The redeemed may walk at leifure there, free from all apprehensions of danger,

Lastly, They shall have a joyful entrance into the other world. Their arrival, in the regions of bliss, will be celebrated with rapturous hymns of praise to their glorious

Redeemer. A dying day is a good day to a godly man. Yea, it is his best day; it is better to him than his birthday, or than the most joyous day which he ever had on earth. A good name, says the wise man, is better than precious ointment; and the day of death, than the day of one's birth, Eccl. vii 1. The notion of the immortality of the foul, and of future happiness, which obtained among some Pagan nations, had wonderful effects on them. Some of them, when they mourned for the dead, did fit in women's apparel, that being moved with the indecency of the garb, they might the fooner lay aside their mourning. Others buried them without any lamentation or mourning; but had a facrifice and a feast for friends upon the occasion. Some were wont to mourn at births, and rejoice at burials. But the practice of some Indian nations is yet more strange, of whom it is reported, that upon the husband's decease, his feveral wives contend before the judges, which of them was the best beloved wife: and she, in whose favour it was determined with a chearful countenance threw herfelf into the flames prepared for her husband's corps, was burned with it, and reckoned happy, while the rest lived in grief, and were accounted milerable. But however lame notions of a future state, assisted by pride, affectation of applause, apprehensions of difficulties in this life, and fuch like principles proper to depraved human nature, may influence rude uncultivated minds, when strengthened by the arts of hell; O what folid joy and consolation may they derive, who are true Christians, being in Christ, who hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel! 2 Tim. i. 10. Death is one of those all things, that work together for good to them that love God, Rom. viii. 28. When the body dies, the foul is perfected: the body of death goes off, at the death of the body. What harm did the jailor to Pharaoh's butler, when he opened the prifon-door to him, and let him out? Is the bird in worfe case, when at liberty, than when confined in a cage? Thus, and no worse, are the souls of the saints treated by death. It comes to the godly man, as Haman came to Mordeçai, with the royal apparel and the horse,

Efth. iv. 11. with commission to do them honour, however aukwardly it be performed. I question not but Haman performed the ceremony with a very ill mien, a pale face, a down look, and a cloudy countenance, and like one who came to hang him, rather than to honour him. But he whom the king delighted to honour, must be honoured; and Haman, Mordecai's grand enemy, must be the man employed to put this honour upon him. Glory, glory, glory, bleffing and praise to our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Mediator, by whose death grim devouring death is made to do fuch a good office to those whom it might otherwise have hurried away in their wickedness, to utter and eternal destruction! A dying day is in itself a joyful day to the godly; it is their redemption-day, when the captives are delivered, when the prisoners are set It is the day of the pilgrims coming home from their pilgrimage; the day in which the heirs of glory return from their travels, to their own country, and their Father's house, and enter into actual possession of the glorious inheritance. It is their marriage-day. Now is the time of espousals; but then the marriage is confummated, and the marriage-feast begun, which has no period. If fo, is not the state of the godly, in death, a hopeful state?

Object. But if the state of the godly, in their death, be so hopeful, how comes it to pass that many of them, when dying, are full of fears, and have little hope? Answ. It must be owned, that faints do not all die in one and the fame manner; there is a diversity among them, as well as among the wicked; yet the worst case of a dying faint is indeed a hopeful one. Some die triumphantly, in full affurance of faith, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. The time of my departure is at band. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. They get a taste of the joys of heaven, while here on earth; and begin the fongs of Zion, while yet in a strange land. Others die in a solid siducial dependence on their Lord and Saviour; though they cannot fing triumphantly, yet they can and will

fay confidently, The Lord is their God. Though they cannot triumph over death, with old Simeon, having Christ in his arms, and saying, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Luke ii. 29, 30. Yet they can say, with dying Jacob, I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord, Gen. xlix. 8. His lest-hand is under their head, to support them, though his right-hand doth not embrace them; they firmly believe, though they are not filled with joy in believing. They can plead the covenant, and hang on the promife, although their house is not so with God as they could wish. The dying day of some saints may be like that day mentioned, Zech. xiv. 7. Not day, nor night. They may die under great doubts and fears; setting as it were in a cloud, and going to heaven in a mist. They may go mourning without the fun, and never put off their spirit of heaviness, till death strip them of it. They may be carried to heaven through the confines of hell; and may be purfued by the devouring lion, even to the very gates of the new Jerusalem; and may be compared to a flip almost wrecked in fight of the harbour, which yet gets safe into port, 1 Cor. iii. 15. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be faved, yet so as by fire. There is safety amidst their fears, but danger in the wicked's strong considence; and there is a bleffed feed of gladness in their greatest forrows; Light is fown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart, Pfal. xcvii. 11.

Now faints are liable to fuch perplexity in their death, because, though they be Christians indeed, yet they are men of like passions with others; and death is a frightful object in itself, whatever dress it appears in; the stern countenance, with which it looks at mortals, can hardly miss of causing them to shrink. Moreover, the saints are of all men the most jealous of themselves. They think of eternity, and of a tribunal, more deeply than others do; with them it is a more serious thing to die than the rest of mankind are aware of. They know the deceits of the heart, the subtilties of depraved human nature, better than others do. Therefore they

may have much to do to keep up hope on a death-bed; while others pass off quietly, like sheep to the slaughter. Satan, who useth all his art to support the hopes of the hypocrite, will do his utmost to marr the peace, and increase the fears of the saint. Finally, the bad frame of spirit, and ill condition, in which death sometimes seizeth a true Christian, may cause this perplexity. By his being in the state of grace, he is indeed always habitually prepared for death, and his dying safely is ensured; but there is more requisite to his actual preparation, and dying comfortably; his spirit must be in

good condition too.

Wherefore, there are three cases, in which death cannot but be very uncomfortable to a child of God. (1.) If it feize him at a time when the guilt of some particular fin, unrepented of, is lying on his conscience; and death comes on that very account, to take him out of the land of the living; as was the case of many of the Corinthian believers, 1 Cor xi. 30. For this cause (namely, of unworthy communicating) many are weak and fickly among you, and many fleep. If a person is surprized with the approach of death, while lying under the guilt of some unpardoned sin, it cannot but cause a mighty consternation. (2.) When death catches him napping. The mid-night cry must be frightful to fleeping virgins. The man who lies in a ruinous house, and awakens not till the timber begins to crack, and the stones to drop down about his ears, may indeed get out of it safely, but not without sears of being crushed by its fall. When a Christian has been going on in a course of security and blacksliding, and awakens not till death comes to his bed-fide, it is no marvel that he gets a fearful awakening. Lastly, When he has lost fight of his faving interest in Christ, and cannot produce evidences of his title to heaven, it is hard to meet death, without some evidence of a title of eternal life at hand: hard to go through the dark valley, without the candle of the Lord shining upon the head. It is a terrible adventure, to launch out into eternity, when a man can make no better of it, than to leap in the dark, not knowing where he shall light, whether in heaven or hell.

Nevertheless, the state of the saints, in their death, is always in itself hopeful. The presumptuous hopes of the ungodly, in their death, cannot make their state hopeful; neither can the hopelessness of a saint make his state hopeless: for God judgeth according to the truth of the thing, not according to men's opinion about it. Howbeit, the faints can no more be altogether without hope, than they can be altogether without faith. Their faith may be very weak, but it fails not; and their hope very low, yet they will, and do hope to the end. Even while the godly feem to be carried away with the stream of doubts and fears, there remains still as much hope as determines them to lay hold on the tree of life, that grows on the banks of the river, Jonah ii. 4. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight : vet I will look again toward thy temple.

Use. This speaks comfort to the godly against the fear of death. A godly man may be called a happy man before his death! because, whatever befal him in life, he shall certainly be happy at death. You who are in Christ, who are true Christians, have hope in your end; and such a hope as may comfort you against all those fears which arise from the consideration of a dying hour. This I shall branch out, in answering

fome cases briefly.

Case I. The prospect of death (will some of the saints say) is uneasy to me, not knowing what shall become of my samily when I am gone. Answ. The righteous hath hope in his death, as to his samily, as well as himself. Although you have little, for the present, to live upon, which has been the condition of God's chosen ones, I Cor. iv. II. We, (namely the apostles) both bunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place: and though you have nothing to leave them, as was the case of that son of the prophets, who did fear the Lord, and yet died in debt, which he was unable to pay; as his poor widow represents, 2 Kings iv. I. yet you have a good friend to leave them to; a covenant God, to whom you may considently commit them, Jer. xlix. II. Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive; and let

thy widows trust in me. The world can bear witness of fignal settlements made upon the children of providence; such as by their pious parents have been cast upon God's providential care. It has been often remarked, that they wanted neither provision nor education. Moses is an eminent instance of this. He, though he was an outcast infant, (Exod. ii. 3.) yet was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Acts vii. 22. and became king in Jeshurun, Deut. xxxiii. 5. O! may we not be ashamed, that we do not considently trust him with the concerns of our families, to whom, as our Saviour and Redeemer, we have committed our eternal interests.

Case II. Death will take us away from our dear friends; yea, we shall not see the Lord in the land of the living, in the blessed ordinances. Answ. It will take you to your best friend, the Lord Christ. The friends you leave behind you, if they be indeed persons of worth, you will meet again, when they come to heaven: and you will never be separated any more. If death takes you away from the temple below, it will carry you to the temple above. It will indeed take you from the streams, but it will set you down by the sountain. If it put out your candle, it will carry you where there is no night,

where there is eternal day.

Case III. I have so much to do, in time of health, to satisfy myself as to my interest in Christ, about my being a real Christian, a regenerate man, I judge it is almost impossible that I should die comfortably. Ans. If it is thus with you, then double your diligence, to make your calling and election fure. Endeavour to grow in knowledge, and walk closely with God: be diligent in self-examination; and pray earnestly for the holy Spirit, whereby you may know the things freely given you of God. If you are enabled, by the power and Spirit of Christ thus diligently to prosecute your spiritual concerns, though the time of your life be neither day nor night, yet at evening-time it may be light. Many weak Christians indulge doubts and fears about their spiritual state, as if they had placed at least some part of religion in this imprudent practice:

but towards the period of life, they think and act in another manner. The traveller, who reckons that he has time to spare, may stand still debating with himself, whether this or the other be the right way: but when the sun begins to set, he is forced to lay aside his scruples, and resolutely to go forward in the road, which he judges to be the right one; lest he lie all night in the open fields. Thus some Christians, who perplex themselves much, through the course of their lives, with jealous doubts and scars, content themselves, when they come to die, with such evidences of the safety of their state, as they could not be satisfied with before; and, by disputing less against themselves, and believing more, court the peace they formely rejected, and gain it too.

Case IV. I am under a sad decay, in respect of my spiritual condition. Answ. Bodily consumptions may make death easy: but it is not so in spiritual decays. I will not say that a godly man cannot be easy in such a case, when he dies; but I believe it is rarely so. Ordinarily, I suppose, a cry comes to awaken sleeping virgins, before death comes. Sampson is set to grind in the prison, till his locks grow again. David and Solomon sell under great spiritual decays; but before they died, they recovered their spiritual strength and vigour. However, bestir yourselves without delay, to strengthen the things that remain: your fright will be the less, for being awakened from spiritual sleep before death comes to your bed-side: and you ought to lose no time, seeing you know not how soon death may seize you.

Case V. It is terrible to think of the other world, that world of spirits, which I have so little acquaintance with. Answ. Thy best friend is Lord of that other world. Abraham's bosom is open even to those who never saw his face. After death, thy soul becomes capable of converse with the blessed inhabitants of the other world. The spirits of just men made perfect were once such as thy spirit now is. And as for the angels, however superior their nature in the rank of beings, yet our nature is dignished above theirs in the man Christ, and they are, all of them, thy Lord's servants, and so thy sellow-servants.

Case VI. The pangs of death are terrible. Answ. Yet not so terrible as pangs of conscience, caused by a piercing sense of guilt, and apprehensions of Divine wrath, with which I suppose thee to be not altogether unacquainted. But who would not endure bodily sickness, that the soul may become found, and every whit whole? Each pang of death will set sin a step nearer the door; and with the last breath the body of sin will breathe out its last. The pains of death will not last long; and the Lord thy God will not leave, but support thee under them.

Case VII. But I am like to be cut off in the midst of my days. Answ. Do not complain, you will be the sooner at home: you hereby have the advantage of your fellow-labourers, who were at work before you, in the vineyard. God, in the course of his providence, hides some of his saints early in the grave, that they may be taken away from the evil to come. An early removal out of this world prevents much sin and misery. They have no ground of complaint, who get the residue of their years in Immanuel's land. Surely thou shalt live as long as thou hast work cut out for thee by the great Master, to be done for him in this world: and when that is at an end, it is high time to be gone.

Case VIII. I am afraid of sudden death. Answ. Thou mayest indeed die so. Good Eli died suddenly, 1 Sam. iv. 18. Yet death found him watching, ver. 13. Watch, therefore, for ye know not at what hour the Lord doth come, Matth. xxiv. 42. But be not afraid, it is an inexpressible comfort, that death, come when it will, can never catch thee out of Christ; and therefore can never seize thee, as a jailor, to hurry thee into the prison of hell. Sudden death may hasten and facilitate thy passage to heaven,

but can do thee no prejudice.

Case IX. I am afraid that it be my lot to die wanting the exercise of reason. Answ. I make no question but a child of God, a true Christian, may die in this case. But what harm? There is no hazard in it, as to his eternal state: a disease at death may divest him of his reason, but not of his religion. When a man, going a long voyage, has put his affairs in order, and put all his goods aboard, he himself may be carried aboard the thip sleeping: all is safe with him, although he knows

not where he is, till he awake in the ship. Even so the godly man, who dies in this case, may die uncomfort-

ably, but not unsafely.

Case X. I am naturally timorous, and the very thoughts of death are terrible to me. Answ. The less you think on death, the thoughts of it will be the more frightful: make it familiar to you by frequent meditations upon it, and you may hereby quiet your fears. Look at the white and bright fide of the cloud: take faith's view of the city that hath foundations; so shall you see hope in your death. Be duly affected with the body of fin and death, the frequent interruptions of your communion with God, and with the glory which dwells on the other side death: this will contribute much to remove slavish fear.

It is pity that faints should be so fond of life as they often are: they ought to be always on good terms with death. When matters are duly considered, it might be well expected, that every child of God, every regenerate man, should generously profess, concerning this life, what Job did, chap vii. 16. I loath it, I would not live always. In order to gain their hearts to this desireable temper, I offer the following additional considerations.

temper, I offer the following additional confiderations. First, Confider the finfulness that attends life in this world. While you live here, you fin, and fee others finning. You breathe infectious air. You live in a pest-house. Is it at all strange to loath such a life? (1.) Your own plague-fores are running on you. Doth not the fin of your nature make you groan daily? Are you not fenfible, that though the cure be begun, it is yet far from being perfected? Has not the leprofy got into the walls of the house, which cannot be removed without pulling it down? Is not your nature so vitiated, that no less than the separation of the soul from the body can root out the disease? Have you not your fores without, as well as your fickness within? Do you not leave marks of your pollution on whatever paffes through your hands? Are not all your actions tainted and blemished with defects and imperfections? Who, then, should be much in love with life, but such whose frekness is their health; and who glory in their shame?

(2.) The loathfome fores of others are always before your eyes, go where you will. The follies and wickedness of men are every where conspicuous, and make but an unpleasant scene. This sinful world is but an unfightly company, a difagreeable crowd, in which the most loathsome are the most numerous. (3.) Are not your own fores oft-times breaking out again, after healing? Frequent relapses may well cause us to remit of our fondness for this life. To be ever struggling, and anon falling into the mire again, makes weary work. Do you never wish for cold death, thereby effectually to cool the heat of those lusts, which often take fire again, even after a flood of godly forrow has gone over them? (4.) Do not you sometimes infect others, and others infect you? There is no fociety in the world, in which every member of it doth not fometimes lay a stumblingblock before the rest. The best carry about with them the tinder of a corrupt nature, which they cannot be rid of while they live, and which is liable to be kindled at all times, and in all places; yea, they are apt to inflame others, and become the occasions of finning. Certainly these things are apt to imbitter this life to the saints.

Secondly, Confider the mifery and troubles that attend it. Rest is desireable, but it is not to be found on this fide of the grave. Worldly troubles attend all men in this life. This world is a fea of trouble, where one wave rolls upon another. They who fancy themselves beyond the reach of trouble, are mistaken: no state, no stage of life, is exempted from it. The crowned head is furrounded with thorny cares. Honour many times paves the way to deep diffrace: riches, for the most part, are kept to the hurt of the owners. The fairest rose wants not prickles; and the heaviest cross is sometimes found wrapped up in the greatest earthly comfort. Spiritual troubles attend the faints in this life. They are like travellers travelling in a cloudy night, in which the moon sometimes breaks out from under one cloud, but quickly hides her head again under another: no wonder that they long to be at their journey's end. The fudden alterations which the best frame of spirit is liable to, the perplexing doubts, confounding fears, shortlived joys, and long running forrows, which have a certain affinity with the present life, must needs create in the saints a desire to be with Christ, which is best of all.

Lastly, Consider the great impersections attending this life. While the foul is lodged in this cottage of clay, the necessities of the body are many; it is always craving. The mud-walls must be repaired and patched up daily, till the clay cottage fall down for good and all Eating, drinking, fleeping, and the like, are in themselves but mean employments for a rational creature, and will be reputed fuch by the heaven-born foul. They are badges of imperfection, and, as fuch, unpleafant to the mind, afpiring unto that life and immortality which is brought to light through the gospel; and would be very grievous, if this state of things were of long continuance. Doth not the gracious foul often find itself yoked with the body, as with a companion in travel, unable to keep pace with it? when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. When the foul would mount upward, the body is a clog upon it, and as a stone tied to the foot of a bird attempting to fly. The truth is, O believer, thy foul in this body is, at best, but like a diamond in a ring, where much of it is obscured: it is far funk in the vile clay, till relieved by death.

I conclude this subject with a few directions, how to prepare for death, so as we may die comfortably. I speak not here of habitual preparation for death, which a true Christian, in virtue of his gracious state, never wants, from the time he is born again, and united to Christ; but of actual preparation, or readiness in respect of his particular case, frame, and disposition of mind and spirit; the want of which makes even a faint very

unfit to die.

First, Let it be your constant care to keep a clean conscience, a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man, Acts xxiv 16. Beware of a standing controversy between God and you, on the account of tome iniquity regarded in the heart. When an honest man is about to leave his country, and not to return, he settles accounts with those he had dealings with, and lays down methods for paying his debts in time, less he be

reckoned a bankrupt, and attacked by an officer when he is going off. Guilt, lying on the conscience, is a fountain of fears, and will readily fling feverely, when death stares the criminal in the face. Hence it is, that many, even of God's children, when dying, wish pasfionately, and defire eagerly, that they may live to do what they ought to have done before that time. Wherefore, walk closely with God; be diligent, strict, and exact in your course: beware of loose, careless, and irregular conversation; as you would not lay up for yourfelves anguish and bitterness of spirit in a dying hour. And because, through the infimity cleaving to us, in our present state of imperfection, in many things we offend all, renew your repentance daily, and be ever washing in the Redeemer's blood. As long as you are in the world, you will need to wash your feet, John xiii. 10. that is, to make application to the blood of Christ anew, for purging your consciences from the guilt of daily miscarriages. Let death find you at the fountain; and, if so, it will find you ready to anfwer its call.

Secondly, Be always watchful, waiting for your change, Like unto men that wait for their lord—that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately, Luke xii. 26. Beware of slumbering and sleeping, while the bridegroom tarries. To be awakened out of spiritual flumber, by a fuprifing call to pass into another world, is a very frightful thing: but he, who is daily waiting for the coming of his Lord, shall comfortably receive the grim messenger, while he beholds him ushering him in to him, of whom he may confidently fay, This is my God, and I have waited for him. The way to die comfortably, is to die daily. Be often effaying (as it were) to die. Bring yourselves familiarly acquainted with death, by making many vifits to the grave, in ferious meditations upon it. This was Job's practice, chap. xvii. 13, 14. I have made my bed in darkness. Go thou and do likewife; and when death comes, thou shalt have nothing to do but to lie down. I have faid to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother and my fifter. Do thou fay fo too; and thou

wilt be the fitter to go home to their house. Be frequently reflecting upon your conduct, and confidering what course of life you wish to be found in, when death arrests you; and act accordingly. When you do the duties of your station in life, or are employed in acts of worship, think with yourselves, that it may be this is the last opportunity; and therefore do it as if you was never to do more of that kind. When you lie down at night, compose your spirits, as if you was not to awake till the heavens be no more. And when you awake in the morning, confider that new day as your last; and live accordingly. Surely that night cometh, of which you will never fee the morning; or that morning, of which you will never see the night. But which of your mornings or nights will be fuch, you know not.

Thirdly, Employ yourselves much in weaning your hearts from the world. The man who is making ready to go abroad, busies himself in taking leave of his friends. Let the mantle of earthly enjoyments hang loofe about you, that it may be easily dropped when death comes to carry you away into another world. Moderate your affections towards your lawful comforts of life: let not your hearts be too much taken with them. The traveller acts unwifely, who fuffers himself to be so allured with the conveniences of the inn where he lodgeth, as to make his necessary departure from it grievous. Feed with fear, and walk through the world as pilgrims and strangers. The same as, when the corn is forsaking the ground, it is ready for the sickle; when the fruit is ripe, it falls off the tree eafily: so, when a Christian's heart is truly weaned from the world, he is prepared for death; and it will be the more easy to him. A heart disengaged from the world, is an heavenly one: we are ready for heaven when our heart is there before us, Mat. vi. 21.

Fourthly, Be diligent in gathering and laying up evidences of your title to heaven, for your support and comfort at the hour of death. The neglect hereof mars the joy and confolation which some Christians might otherwise have at their death. Wherefore, ex-

amine yourselves frequently, as to your spiritual state; that evidences, which lie hid unobserved, may be brought to light, and taken notice of. And if you would manage this work successfully, make solemn serious work of it. Set apart some time for it. And, after earnest prayer to God, through Jesus Christ, for the enlightening influences of his Holy Spirit, whereby you may be enabled to understand his own word, and to discern his own work in your souls; examine yourselves before the tribunal of your consciences, that you may judge your

selves in this weighty matter.

And, in the first place, let the marks of a regenerate state be fixed from the Lord's word: have recourse to fome particular text for that purpole; such as Prov. viii. 17. I love them that love me. Comp. Luke xiv. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and fifters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Psal. cxix. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Psal. xviii. 23. I was also upright before him; and I kept myself from mine iniquity. Compare Rom. vii. 22, 23. I delight in the law of God, after the inguard man: but I fee another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind. I John iii. 3. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Mat. v. iii. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Phil. iii. 3. We are the circumcisson, which worship (or serve) God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no considence in the stess. The sum of the evidence arising from these texts lies here: a real Christian is one who loves God for himself, as well as for his benefits; and that with a supreme love, above all persons, and all things: he has an awful and partial regard to God's commands: he opposeth and wrestleth against that sin which of all others most easily besets him: he approveth and loveth the holy law, even in that very point wherein it strikes against his most beloved lust: his hope of heaven engageth him in the study of universal holiness; in the which he aims at perfection, though he cannot reach it in this life: he ferves the Lord, not only in acts of worship, but in the

whole of his conversation: and as to both, is spiritual in the principle, motives, aims, and ends of his fervice: yet he fees nothing in himself to trust to before the Lord: Christ and his fullness is the stay of his soul: his confidence is cut off from all that is not Christ, or in Christ, in point of justification, or acceptance with God, and in point of fanctification too. Every one, in whom these characters are found, has a title to heaven, according to the word. It is convenient and profitable to mark fuch texts, for this special use, as they occur, while you read the Scriptures, or hear fermons. The marks of a regenerate state thus fixed, in the next place, impartially fearch and try your own hearts thereby, as in the fight of God, with dependance on him for spiritual discernment, that you may know whether they be in you or not. When you find them, form the conclusion deliberately and diftinctly; namely, that therefore you are regenerated, and have a title to heaven. Thus you may gather evidences. But be fure to have recourse to God in Christ, by earnest prayer, for the testimony of the Spirit, whose office it is to bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, Rom. viii. 16. Moreover, carefully observe the course and method of providence towards you; and likewise, how your soul is affected under the fame, in the various steps thereof: compare both with Scripture-doctrines, promises, threatenings, and examples; so shall you perceive if the Lord deals with you as he useth to do unto those that love his name, and if you be going forth by the footsteps of the flock. This may afford you comfortable evidence. Walk tenderly and circumspectly, and the Lord will manifest himself to you, according to his promise, John xiv. 21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to bim. But it is in vain to think of fuccessful self-examination, if you be loofe and irregular in your conversation.

Lastly, Dispatch the work of your day and generation with speed and diligence. David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep,

Acts xiii. 36. God has allotted us certain pieces of work of this kind, which ought to be dispatched before the time of working be over, Eccl. ix. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goeft. Gal. vi. 10. As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. If a passenger, after he is got on ship board, and the ship is getting under sail, remembers that he has omitted to dispatch a piece of necessary business when he was ashore, it must needs be uneafy to him: even fo, reflection in a dying hour, upon neglected feafons, and lost opportunities, cannot fail to disquiet a Christian. Wherefore, whatever is incumbent upon thee to do for God's honour, and the good of others, either as the duty of thy station, or by special opportunity put into thy hand, perform it seafonably, if thou wouldst die comfortably

HEAD

The RESSURRECTION.

John v. 28, 29. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall bear his voice. and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

THESE words are part of the defence which our Lord Jesus Christ makes for himself, when perfecuted by the Jews, for curing the impotent man, and ordering him to carry away his bed on the Sabbath; and for vindicating his conduct, when accused by them of having profaned that day. On this occasion he professeth himself not only Lord of the Sabbath, but also Lord of life and death; declaring, in the words of the text, the refurrection of the dead to be brought to pass by his power. This he introduces with these words, as

with a folemn preface, Marvel not at this, i. e. at this strange discourse of mine: do not wonder to hear me, whose appearance is so very mean in your eyes, talk at this rate; for the day is coming, in which the dead

shall be raised by my power.

Observe in this text, (1.) The doctrine of the refurrection afferted: All that are in the graves shall bear his voice, and shall come forth. The dead bodies, which are reduced to dust, shall revive, and evidence life by hearing and moving. (2.) The author of it, Jesus Christ, the Son of man, ver. 27. The dead shall hear his voice, and be raised thereby. (3.) The number that shall be raised, All that are in the graves, i. e. all the dead bodies of men, however differently disposed of in different graves; or all the dead, good and bad. They are not all buried in graves, properly fo called: fome are burnt to ashes; some drowned, and buried in the bellies of fishes; yea, some devoured by man-eaters, called Canibals: but wherever the matter or substance of which the body was composed is to be found, thence they shall come forth, (4.) The great distinction that shall be made between the godly and the wicked. They shall indeed both rife again in the resurrection. None of the godly shall be missing, though, perhaps, they either had no burial, or a very obscure one: and all the wicked shall come forth; their vaulted tombs shall hold them no longer than the voice is uttered. But the former shall have a joyful resurrection to life, whilst the latter have a dreadful refurrection to damnation. Lastly, The set time of this great event: there is an hour, or certain fixed period of time, appointed of God for it. We are not told when that hour will be, but that is coming; for this, among other reasons, that we may always be ready.

DOCTRINE, There shall be a resurrection of the dead.

In discoursing on this subject, I shall, first, shew the certainty of the resurrection; next, I shall enquire into the nature of it; and, lastly, Make some practical improvement of the whole.

I. In shewing the certainty of the resurrection, I shall prove, (1.) That God can raise the dead. (2.) That

he will do it; which are the two grounds or topics laid down by Christ himself, when disputing with the Sadducees, Mat. xxii. 29. Fesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

First, Seeing God is almighty, furely he can raise the dead. We have instances of this powerful work of God. both in the Old and New Testament. The son of the widow in Sarepta was raifed from the dead, I Kings xvii. 22. The Shunamite's fon, Kings iv. 35. And the man cast into the sepulchre of Elisha, chap. xiii. 21. In which we may observe a gradation, the second of these miraculous events being more illustrious than the first, and the third than the second. The first of these persons was raised when he was but newly dead; the prophet Elijah, who raised him, being present at his decease. The second, when he had lien dead a considerable time; namely, while his mother travelled from Shunem to mount Carmel, (reckoned about the distance of fixteen miles) and returned from thence to her house, with Elisha, who raised him. The last, not till they were burying him, and the corps was cast into the prophet's grave. In like manner, in the New Testament, Jairus's daughter, (Mark v. 41.) and Dorcas, (Acts ix. 40.) were both raifed to life, when lately dead; the widow's fon in Nain, when they were carrying him out to bury him, Luke vii. 11. 15. and Lazarus, when stinking in the grave, John xi. 39. 44.

Can men make curious glasses out of ashes, reduce slowers into ashes, and raise them again out of these ashes, restoring them to their former beauty; and cannot the great Creator, who made all things of nothing, raise man's body, after it is reduced into dust? If it be objected, How can men's bodies be raised up again, after they are turned into dust, and the ashes of many generations are mingled together? Scripture and reason furnish the answer; With men it is impossible, but not with God. It is absurd for men to deny that God can do a thing, because they see not how it may be done. How small a portion do we know of his ways! How absolutely incapable are we of conceiving distinctly of the extent of almighty power; and much more of comprehending its actings, and method of procedure! I

question not, but many illiterate men are as great infidels to many chymical experiments, as some learned men are to the doctrine of the refurrection: and as these last are ready to deride the former, so the Lord will have them in derision. What a mystery was it to the Indian, that the Europeans could, by a piece of paper, converse together at the distance of some hundreds of miles! How much were they aftonished to fee them, with their guns, produce as it were thunder and lightening in a moment, and at pleasure kill men afar off! Shall fome men do fuch things as are wonders in the eyes of others, because they cannot comprehend them! and shall men confine the infinite power of God within the narrow boundaries of their own shallow capacity, in a matter no ways contrary to reason? An inferior nature has but a very imperfect conception of the power of a superior. Brutes do not conceive of the actings of reason in men; and men have but lame notions of the power of angels: how low and inadequate a conception, then, must a finite nature have of the power of that which is infinite! Though we cannot conceive how God acts, yet we ought to believe he can do above what we can think or conceive of.

Wherefore, let the bodies of men be laid in the grave; let them rot there, and be reduced to the most minute particles: or let them be burnt, and the ashes cast into rivers, or thrown up into the air, to be scattered by the wind: let the dust of a thousand generations be mingled, and the stems of the dead bodies wander to and fro in the air: let birds or wild beafts eat the dead bodies, or the fishes of the sea devour them, fo that the parts of human bodies, thus destroyed, pass into substantial parts of birds, beasts, or fishes: or, what is more than that, let man-eaters, who themselves must die, and rise again, devour human bodies; and let others devour them again; and then let our modern Sadducees propose the question in these cases, as the ancient Sadducees did in the case of the woman who had been married to feven husbands succesfively, Matt. xxii. 28. We answer, as our blessed Lord and Saviour did, verse 29. Te do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. We believe God to be omniscient, and omnipotent; infinite in knowledge and in power: and hence, agreeably to the dictates of reason, we conclude the possibility of the resurrection,

even in the cases supposed.

Material things may change their forms and shapes, may be reduced to the principles of which they are formed: but they are not annihilated, or reduced to nothing; nor can they be so, by any created power. God is omniscient, his understanding is infinite: therefore he knows all things; what they were at any time, what they are, and where they are to be found. Though the country-man, who comes into the apothecary's shop, cannot find out the drug he wants; yet the apothecary himself knows what he has in his shop, whence it came, and where it is to be found. And in a mixture of many different feeds, the expert gardner can distinguish between seed and seed. Why then may not Omniscience distinguish between dust and dust? Can he, who knows all things to perfection, be liable to any mistake about his own creatures? Whoso believes an infinite understanding, must needs own, that no mass of dust is so jumbled together, but God perfectly comprehends, and infallibly knows, how the most minute particle, and every one of them, is to be matched. Therefore he knows where the particles of each dead body are; whether in the earth, sea, or air, how confused soever they are scattered. And particularly, he knows where to find the primitive substance of the man-eater, however evaporated or reduced, as it were, into the air or vapour, by fweat, or perspiration; and how to separate the parts of the body that was caten, from the body of the eater, however incorporated or made one body with it: and fo understands, not only how, but whence, he is to bring back the primitive substance of the man-eater to its proper place; and also to separate from the man-eater's body that part of the devoured body which goes into its fubstance, and is indeed but a very small part of it. It is certain that the bodies of men, as of all other animals or living creatures, are in a continual flux: they

grow and are sustained by daily food; so small a part whereof becomes nourishment, that the most part evaporates. It is reckoned that, at least, as much of the food evaporates insensibly by perspiration, as is voided by other perceptible ways. Yea, the nourishing part of the food, when affimilated, and hereby become a part of the body, evaporates by perspiration, through the pores of the skin, and is again supplied by the use of other food: yet the body is still reckoned one and the fame body. Whence we may conclude, that it is not effential to the refurrection of the body, that every particle of the matter, which at any time was part of a human body, should be restored to it, when it is raised up from death to life. Were it so, the bodies of men would become of fo huge a fize, that they would bear no refemblance to the perfons. It is sufficient to denominate it the fame body that died, when it is rifen again, if the body that is raised be formed in its former proportions, of the same particles of matter, which at any time were its constituent parts, however it be refined. The same as, we reckon it is the same body that was pined away by long fickness, which becomes fat and fair again after recovery.

Now, to this infinite understanding join infinite power, whereby he is able to fubdue all things unto himfelf; and this gloriously great work appears most reasonable If Omniscience can discover every little particle of dust, where it is, and how it is to be matched, cannot Omnipotence bring them, and join them together in order? Can the watch-maker take up the feveral pieces of a watch, lying in a confused heap before him, and set each in its proper place; and cannot God put the human body into order, after its dissolution? Did he speak this world into being, out of nothing; and cannot he form man's body out of its pre-existent matter? If he calleth those things which be not, as though they were, furely he can call things that are diffolved, to be as they were, before the compound was resolved into its parts and principles. Wherefore, God can raise the dead. And why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? Acts xxvi. 8.

Secondly, God will do it. He not only can do it; but he certainly will do it, because he has said it. Our text is very full to this purpose, All that are in the graves shall hear his voice: and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. These words relate to, and are an explanation of, that part of Daniel's prophecy, Dan. xii. 2. Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting contempt; which appears to be calculated to confront the doctrine of the Sadducees; which the Holy Ghost knew was to be at a great height in the Jewish church, under the persecution of Antiochus. There are many other texts in the Old and New Testament, that might be adduced; fuch as Acts xxiv. 15. And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And Job xix. 26, 27. Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be confumed within me. But I need not multiply testimonies, in a matter so clearly and frequently taught in sacred Scripture. Our Lord and Saviour himself proves it against the Sadducees, in that remarkable text. Luke xx. 37, 38. Now that the dead are raifed, ever Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God o facob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living for all live unto him. These holy Patriarchs were dead nevertheless, the Lord Jehovah is called their God namely, in virtue of the covenant of grace, and is the sense thereof; in which sense the phrase compre hends all bleffedness, as that which by the covenant i fecured to them who are in it, Heb. xii. 16. God is m . ashamed to be called their God : for he hath prepared fe them a city. He is not called the God of their fou only; but their God, the God of their persons, sou and bodies; the which, by virtue of his truth an faithfulness, must have its full effect : now it canno have its full effect on the dead, who, in as much a they are dead, are far from all bleffedness; but on the

living, who alone are capable of it: therefore, fince God is still called their God, they are living in respect of God *, although their bodies are yet in the grave; for, in respect of him, who by his power can restore them to life, and in his covenant has declared his will and purpose so to do, and whose promise cannot fail, they all are to be reckoned to live; and, consistent with the covenant, their death is but a sleep, out of which, in virtue of the same covenant, securing all blessedness to their persons, their whole man, they must and shall certainly be awakened. The apostle Paul proves the resurrection at large, I Cor. xv. and shews it to be a fundamental article, the denial whereof is subversive of Christianity, ver. 13, 14, If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

To affift us in conceiving of it, the Scripture gives us types of the refurrection of the dead; as the dry bones living, Ezek. xxxvii. Jonah's coming out of the whale's belly, Matt. xii. 40. And nature affords us emblems and refemblances of it, as the fun's fetting and rifing again; night and day, winter and fummer, fleeping and awaking; fwallows in winter, lying void of all appearance of life, in ruinous buildings, fubterraneous caverns, and reviving again in the fpringfeafon; the feed dying under the clod, and after fpringing up again: all which, and the like, may justly be admitted as defigned by the God of nature, though not for proofs, yet for memorials of the refurrection; whereof we have affurance from the Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 36. Thou fool, that which that fowest is not quickened,

except it die.

II. I shall enquire into the nature of the resurrection; shewing, First, Who shall be raised. 2dly, What shall be raised. 3dly, How the dead shall be raised.

I. Who shall be raised. Our text tells us who they are; namely, All that are in the graves, that is, all mankind who are dead. As for those persons who shall

^{*} Their fouls are actually so, and enjoy communion with him, and faints and angels.

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be found alive, at the fecond coming of Christ, they fhall not die, and foon after be raifed again: but fuch a change shall suddenly pass upon them, as shall be to them instead of dying and rising again; so that their bodies shall become like to those bodies which are raifed out of the graves, I Cor. xv. 51, 52 We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Hence those who are to be judged at the great day, are distinguished into quick and dead, Acts x. 42. All the dead shall rife, whether godly or wicked, just or unjust, (Acts xxiv. 15.) old or young: the whole race of mankind, even those who never saw the fun, but died in their mother's belly, Rev. xx. 12. And I faw the dead, small and great, stand before God. The sea and earth shall give up their dead, without re-

ferve; none shall be kept back.

II. What shall be raised. The bodies of mankind. A man is faid to die, when the foul is separated from the body, and returns unto God who gave it, Eccl. xii. 7. But it is the body only which is laid in the grave, and can be properly faid to be raifed: wherefore the refurrection is, strictly speaking, competent to the body only. Moreover, it is the same body that dies, which shall rise again. At the resurrection, men shall not appear with other bodies, for fubstance, than those which they now have, and which are laid down in the grave; but with the felf-same bodies, endowed with other qualities. The very notion of a refurrection implies this, fince nothing can be faid to rife again, but that which falls. But to illustrate it a little; First, It is plain from Scripture testimony. The apostle afferts, that it is this mortal which must put on immortality, 1 Cor. xv. 53. and that Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. Death, in Scripture-language, is a fleep, and the refurrection an awakening out of that fleep, Job xvi. 12. which shews the body rising up to be the self-same that died. Secondly, The equity of the divine procedure, both with respect to the godly and the wicked, proves this. It is not reckoned equal among men, that one do the work, and another get the reward. Though the glori-

fying of the bodies of the faints is not, properly speaking, and in a strict sense, the reward of their services or fufferings on earth; yet this is evident, that it is not at all agreeable to the manner of the divine dispenfation, that one body should serve him, and another be glorified; that one should fight, and another receive the crown. How can it be imagined, that the temples of the Holy Ghost (as the bodies of believers are termed, 1 Cor. vi. 19.) should always lie in rubbish, and others be reared up in their stead? That the members of Chrift, (ver. 15.) should perish utterly, and other bodies come in their room? Nay, furely, as the bodies of the faints now bear a part in glorifying God, and fome of them fuffer in his cause, so they shall partake of the glory that is to be revealed. And the bodies of the wicked, which are laid in the dust, shall be raised again, that the same body which sinned may suffer. Shall one body fin here, and another fuffer in hell for that fin? shall that body, which was the foul's companion in fin, lie for ever hid in the dust; and another body, which did not act any part in finning, be its companion in torment? No, no; it is that body, which now takes up all their thoughts, to provide for its back and belly, that shall be raised up, to suffer in hell. It is that tongue that is now the swearing, lying tongue, which will need water to cool it, in eternal flames. The fame feet, that now fland in the way of finners, and carry men in their ungodly courses, shall stand in the burning lake. And the same covetous and lascivious eyes shall take part in the fire and smoke of the pit.

III. How the dead shall be raised. The same Jesus, who was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem, shall at the last day, to the conviction of all, be declared both Lord and Christ; appearing as judge of the world, attended with his mighty angels, 2 Thest. i. 7. He shall descend from beaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God, 1 Thest. iv. 16. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and those who are alive changed, 1 Cor. xv. 52. Whether this shout, voice, and trumpet, denote some audible

voice, or only the workings of divine power, for the raising of the dead, and other awful purposes of that day, (though the former feems propable) I will not positively determine. There is no question, but this coming of the Judge of the world will be in greater majesty and terror than we can conceive: yet that awful grandeur, majesty and state, which was displayed at the giving of the law, viz. thunders heard, lightenings, and a thick cloud upon the mount feen, the Lord descending in fire, the whole mount quaking greatly, and the voice of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, (Exod. xix. 16. 18, 19.) may help us to form a becoming thought of it. However, the found of this trumpet shall be heard all the world over; it shall reach to the depths of the sea, and into the bowels of the earth. At this loud alarm, bones shall come together, bone to his bone: the scattered dust of all the dead shall be gathered together, dust to his dust; neither shall one thrust another, they shall walk every one in his path: and meeting together again, shall make up that very same body which crumbled into dust in the grave. At the same alarming voice, shall every soul come again into its own body, never more to be separated. The dead can stay no longer in their graves, but must bid an eternal farewell to their long homes: they hear his voice, and must come forth, and receive their final fentence.

Now, as there is a great difference between the godly and the wicked, in their life, and in their death;

to there will be also in their resurrection.

The godly shall be raised out of their graves, by virtue of the Spirit of Christ, the blessed bond of their union with him, Rom. viii. 11. He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelieth in you. Jesus Christ arose from the dead, as the first fruits of them that slept, 1 Cor. xvi. 20. So they that are Christ's, shall follow at his coming, ver. 23. The mystical head having got above the waters of death, he cannot but bring forth the members after him in due time.

They shall come forth with inexpressible joy: for then shall that passage of Scripture, which in its imme-

diate scope respected the Babylonish captivity, be fully accomplished in its extensive spiritual view, Isa: xxvi. 19. Awake and fing, 'ye that dwell in the dust. As a bride, adorned for her husband, goes forth from her bed-chamber unto the marriage; so shall the faints go forth from their graves, unto the marriage of the Lamb. Joseph had a joyful coming out from the prison, Daniel from the lion's den, and Jonah from the whale's belly; yet those are but faint representations of the faints coming forth from the grave at the refurrection. Then shall they fing the fong of Moses and of the Lamb, in highest strains; death being quite swallowed up in victory. They had, while in this life, sometimes sung, by faith, the triumphant fong over death and the grave, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 1 Cor. xv. 55. but then they fing the same, from fight and fense. The black band of doubts and fears, which frequently disturbed them, and disquieted their minds,

is for ever disbanded, and driven away.

May we not suppose the soul and body of every saint, as in mutual embraces, to rejoice in each other, and triumph in their happy meeting again; and the body to address the foul thus? "O my foul, are we got together again, after fo long a separation! Art thou come back to thine old habitation, never more to remove! O joyful meéting! how unlike is our present state, to what our case was when a feparation was made between us at death! Now is our mourning turned into joy; the light and gladness sown before, are now sprung up, and there is a perpetual spring in Immanuel's land. Bleffed be the day in which I was united to thee; whose chief care was to get Christ in us the hope of glory, and to make me a temple for his Holy Spirit. O bleffed foul, which in the time of our pilgrimage kept thine eye to the land then afar off, but now near at hand! thou tookest me into secret places, and there madest me to bow these knees before the Lord, that I might bear a part in our humiliation before him: and now is the time that I am lifted up. Thou didst employ this tongue, in confessions, petitions, and thanksgivings, which henceforth shall be employed in prasing for evermore. Thou

madest these sometimes weeping eyes, sow that seed of tears, which is now sprung up in joy, that shall never end. I was happily beat down by thee, and kept in subjection, while others pampered their flesh, and made their bellies their gods, to their own destruction: but now I gloriously arile, to take my place in the manfions of glory, whilst they are dragged out of their graves, to be cast into fiery flames. Now, my foul, thou shalt complain no more of a fick and pained body; thou thalt be no more clogged with weak and weary flesh: I shall now hold pace with thee in the praises of our God for evermore." And may not the foul fay, "O happy day in which I return to dwell in that bleffed body, which was, and is, and will be for ever, a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Spirit! Now I shall be eternally knit to thee: the filver cord shall never be loosed more: death shall never make another separation between us. Arife, then, my body, and come away! and let these eyes, which were wont to weep over my fins, behold, with joy, the face of our glorious Redeemer; lo! this is our God, and we have waited for him. Let these ears, which were wont to hear the word of life in the temple below, come and hear the hallelujahs in the temple above. Let these feet, that carried me to the congregation of faints on earth, take their place among those in heaven. And let this tongue, which confessed Christ before men, and used to be still dropping fomething to his commendation, join the choir of the upper house, in his praises for evermore. Thou shalt fast no more, but keep an everlasting feast; thou shalt weep no more, neither shall thy countenance be overclouded; but thou shalt shine for ever, as a star in the firmament. We took part together in the fight, come let us go together to receive and wear the crown."

But, on the other hand, the wicked shall be raised by the power of Christ, as a just Judge, who is to render vengeance to his enemies. The same divine power, which shut up their souls in hell, and kept their bodies in the grave, as in a prison, shall bring them forth, that soul and body together may receive the dreadful sentence of eternal damnation, and be shut up toge-

ther in the prison of hell.

They shall come forth from their graves, with unspeakable horror and consternation. They shall be dragged forth, as so many malefactors out of a dungeon, to be led to execution; crying to the mountains and to the rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb. Fearful was the cry in Egypt, the night which the destroying angel went through, and flew their first-born. Dreadful were the shouts, at the earth's opening her mouth, and swallowing up Dathan and Abiram, and all that appertained to them. What hideous crying then must there be, when, at the sound of the last trumpet, the earth and sea shall open their mouths, and cast forth all the wicked world, delivering them up to the dreadful Judge! how will they cry, roar, and tear themselves! how will the jovial companions weep and howl, and curse one another! how will the earth be filled with their doleful shricks and lamentations, while they are pulled out like sheep for the flaughter! they who, while they lived in the world, were profane debauchees, covetous worldlings, or formal hypocrites, shall then, in anguish of mind, wring their hands, beat their breasts, and bitterly lament their case, roaring forth their complaints, and calling themfelves beafts, fools, and mad-men, for having acted fo mad a part in this life, in not believing what they then heard. They were driven away in their wickedness, at death: and now all their fins rife with them, and, like fo many ferpents, twift themselves about their wretched fouls, and bodies too, which have a frightful meeting, after a long separation.

Then we may suppose the miserable body thus to accost the soul: "Hast thou again sound me, O mine enemy, my worst enemy, savage soul, more cruel than a thousand tygers? cursed be the day that ever we met. O that I had remained a lifeless lump, rotted in the belly of my mother, and had never received sense, life, nor motion! O that I had rather been the body of a toad or serpent, than thy body; for then had I lien still, and had not seen this terrible day! If I was to be necessarily thine, O that I had been thy as! or one of thy dogs, rather than thy body; for then woulds thou

have taken more true care of me than thou didft. O cruel kindness! hast thou thus hugged me to death, thus nourished me to the flaughter? is this the effect of thy tenderness for me? is this what I am to reap of thy pains and concern about me? what do riches and pleafures avail now, when this fearful reckoning is come; of which thou hadft fair warning? O cruel grave! why didst thou not close thy mouth upon me for ever? why didft thou not hold fast thy prisoner? why hast thou shaken me out, while I lay still, and was at rest? Cursed foul, wherefore didft thou not abide in thy place, wrapped up in flames of fire? wherefore art thou come back to take me also down to the bars of the pit? thou madest me an instrument of unrighteousness; and now I must be thrown into the fire. This tongue was by thee employed in mocking at religion, curfing, fwearing, lying, backbiting, and boafting; and with-held from glorifying God: and now it must not have so much as a drop of water to cool it in the flames. Thou didst withdraw mine ears from hearing the sermons, which gave warning of this day. Thou foundest ways and means to stop them from attending to seafenable exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs. But why didst thou not stop them from hearing the found of this dreadful trumpet? why doft thou not now rove and fly away on the wings of imagination, thereby, as it were, transporting me during these frightful transactions; as thou was wont to do, when I was fet down at fermons, communions, prayers, and godly conferences; that I might now have as little fense of the one, as I formerly had of the other? But, ah! I must burn for ever, for thy love to thy lusts, thy profanity, thy fenfuality, thy unbelief, and hypocrify." But may not the foul answer? "Wretched and vile carcase, I am now driven back into thee, O that thou hadft lien rotting for ever in thy grave! Had I not torment enough before? Must I be knit to thee again, that being joined together, as two dry flicks for the fire, the wrath of God may burn us up? it was by caring for you, that I loft myfelf. It was your back and your belly, and the gratifying of your fenfes, which ruined me? How of-

ten was I enfnared by your ears? how often betrayed by your eyes? it was to spare you, that I neglected opportunities of making peace with God, loitered away Sabbaths, lived in the neglect of prayer; went to the house of mirth, rather than the house of mourning; and that I chose to deny Christ, and sorfake his cause and interests in the world; and so am fallen a facrifice to your curfed eafe. When at any time my confcience began to awake, and I was fetting myfelf to think of my fins, and the mifery which I have felt fince we parted, and now feel, it was you that diverted me from these thoughts, and drew me off to make provision for thee. O wretched flesh! by your filken cords of fleshly lusts, I was drawn to destruction, over the belly of my light conscience: but now they are turned into iron chains, with which I am to be held under wrath for evermore. Ah wretched profits! ah curfed pleafures! for which I must lie for ever in utter darkness." But no complaints will then avail. O that men were wife, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.

As to the qualities with which the bodies of the faints shall be endowed at the resurrection, the apostle tells us they shall be raised incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual, I Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44. It is fown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is fown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is fown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

First, The bodies of the saints shall be raised incorruptible. They are now as the bodies of others, a very mass of corruption, full of the seeds of diseases and death; and, when dead, become so nauseous, even to their dearest friends, that they must be buried out of their sight, in a grave, there to rot, and be consumed: yea, loathsome fores and diseases make some of them very unsightly, even while alive. But at the resurrection they leave all the seeds of corruption behind them in the grave; and rise incorruptible, incapable of the least indisposition, sickness, or fore, and much more of dying. External violences, and inward causes of pain, shall for ever cease: they shall feel it no more: yea, they shall have an everlasting youth and vigour, being no more subject to the decays which age produced in this life.

Secondly, They shall be glorious bodies; not only beautiful, comely, and well proportioned, but full of splendour and brightness. The most beautiful face, and best proportioned body, that now appears in the world, is not to be named in comparison with the body of the meanest saint at the resurrection; for then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, Matt. xiii. 43. If there was a dazling glory on Moles's face, when he came down from the mount; and if Stephen's face was as it had been the face of an angel, when he stood before the council, how much more thall the faces of the faints be beautiful and glorious, full of fweet, agreeable majesty, when they shall have put off all corruption, and thine as the fun? But observe, this beauty of the saints is not restricted to their faces, but diffuses itself through their whole bodies: for the whole body is raifed in glory, and shall be fashioned like unto their Lord and Saviour's glorious body; in whose transfiguration, not only did his face shine as the sun, but also his raiment was white as the light, Matt. xvii. 2. Whatever defects or deformities the bodies of the faints had, when laid in the grave, occasioned by accidents in life, or arising from fecret causes in their formation in the womb, they shall rise out of the grave free of all these. But suppose the marks of the Lord Jesus, the scars or prints of the wounds and bruifes which fome of the faints received while on earth, for his fake, should remain in their bodies after the refurrection; the same as the print of the nails remained in the Lord Jesus's body after his resurrection; these marks will rather be badges of distinction, and add to their glory, than detract from their beauty. But however that be, furely Isaac's eyes shall not then be dim, nor will Jacob halt: Leah shall not be tender-eyed, nor Mephibosheth lame of his legs. For as the gold-finith melts down the old crazy veffel, and casts it over again in a new mould, bringing it forth with a new luftre; fo shall the vile body, which lay diffolved in the grave, come forth at the refurrection, in perfect beauty and comely proportion.

Thirdly, They shall be powerful and strong bodies: the strongest man on earth, being frail and mortal, may justly be reckoned weak and feeble, in regard their

ftrength, however great, is quickly worn out and confumed. Many of the faints now have weaker bodies than others; but the feeble among them (to allude to Zech. xii. 8. at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God. A grave Divine fays, That one shall be stronger, at the resurrection, than an hundred, yea, than thousands are now. Certainly, great, and vaftly great, must the strength of glorified bodies be; for they shall bear up under an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The mortal body is not at all. adapted to such a state. Do transports of joy occasion death, as well as excessive grief does? and can it bear up under a weight of glory? can it subsist in union with a foul filled with heaven's raptures? Surely no. The mortal body would fink under that load, and fuch a fill would make the earthen pitcher to fly all in pieces, The Scripture has plainly told us, That flesh and blood, (namely, in their present frail state, though it were the flesh and blood of a giant) cannot inherit the kingdom of God, I Cor. xv. 50. How strong must the bodily eyes be, which, to the foul's eternal comfort, shall behold the dazling glory and splendour of the new Jerufalem; and stedfastly look at the transcendent glory and brightness of the man Christ, the Lamb, who is the light of that city, the inhabitants whereof shall shine as the fun? The Lord of heaven doth now, in mercy, hold back the face of his throne, and fpreadeth his cloud upon it, that mortals may not be confounded with the rays of glory which shine forth from it, Job xxvi. 9. but then the veil shall be removed, and they be made able to behold it, to their unspeakable joy. How strong must their bodies be, who shall not rest night nor day, but be, without intermission, for ever employed in the heavenly temple, to fing and proclaim the praises of God without weariness, which is a weakness incident to the frail mortal, but not to the glorified body!

Lafily, They shall be spiritual bodies. Not that they shall be changed into spirits: but they shall be spiritual, in respect of their spirit-like qualities and endowments. The body shall be absolutely subservient to the soul, subject to it, and insluenced by it; and

therefore no more a clog to its activity, nor the animal appetites a snare to it. There will be no need to beat it down, nor to drag it to the service of God. The foul, in this life, is so much influenced by the body, that, in Scripture-style, it is said to be carnal: but then the body shall be spiritual, readily serving the soul in the business of heaven; and in that only, as if it had no more relation to earth than a spirit. It will have no further need of the now necessary supports of life. namely, food and raiment, and the like. They shall bunger no more, neither thirst any more, Rev. vii. 16. For in the refurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the augels of God in beaven. Then shall the faints be strong, without meat or drink, warm, without cloaths, ever in perfect health, without medicine, and ever fresh and vigorous, though they shall never sleep, but serve him night and day in his temple, Rev. vii. 15. They will need none of these things more than spirits do. They will be nimble and active as spirits, and of a most refined constitution. The body, that is now lumpish and heavy, shall then be most sprightly. No fuch thing as melancholy shall be found, to make the heart heavy, and the spirits flag and fink. Where the carcase is, there shall the saints, as so many eagles, be gathered together. I shall not further dip into this matter: the day will declare it.

As to the qualities of the bodies of the wicked, at the refurrection. I find that the Scripture speaks but little of them. Whatever they may need, they shall not get a drop of water to cool their tongues, Luke xvi. 24, 25. Whatever may be faid of their weakness, it is certain they will be continued for ever in life, that they may be ever dying: they shall bear up, however unwilling, under the load of God's wrath, and shall not faint away under it. The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. And they have no rest day nor night. Surely they shall not partake of the glory and beauty of the saints. All their glory dies with them, and shall never rise again. Daniel tells us, they shall awake to shame, and everlassing contempt, chap. xii. 2. Shame follows sin, as the shadow followeth the body: but the wicked in this world walk in the dark,

and often under a disguise: nevertheless, when the Judge comes in flaming fire, at the last day, they will be brought to the light; their mask will be taken off, and the shame of their nakedness will clearly appear to themselves and others, and fill their faces with confusion. Their shame will be too deep for blushes: all their faces shall gather blackness at that day; when they shall go forth of their graves, as malefactors out of their prisons to execution: for their refurrection is the refurrection of damnation. The greatest beauties, who now pride themselves in their comeliness of body, not regarding their deformed fouls, will then appear with a ghaftly countenance, a grim and death-like vifage. Their looks will be frightful, and they will be horrible spectacles, coming forth from their graves like infernal furies out of the pit. They shall rife also to everlasting contempt. They shall then be the most contemptible creatures, filled with contempt from God, as veffels of dishonour, whatever honourable employs they had in this world; and filled also with contempt from men. They will be most despicable in the eyes of the faints, even of those saints who gave them honour here, either for their high station, the gifts of God in them, or because they were of the same human nature with themselves. But then shall their bodies be as so many loathsome carcases, which they shall go forth and look upon with abhorrence: yea, they shall be an abborring unto all slesh, Ifa. Ixvi. 24. The word here rendered an abborring, is the fame which in the other text is rendered contempt; and Isaiah and Daniel point at one and the same thing, namely, the loathformers of the wicked at the refurrection. They will be loathsome in the eyes of one another. The unclean wretches were never so lovely to each other, as then they will be loathfome: dear companions in fin will then ablior each other; and the wicked, great and honourable men, shall be no more regarded by their wicked subjects, their servants, their slaves, than the mire in the streets.

Use I. Of comfort to the people of God. The doctrine of the refurrection is a spring of consolation and joy unto you. Think on it, O believers, when you are in the house of mourning, for the loss of your godly

relations or friends, that ye forrow not even as others, which have no hope; for you will meet again, I Thest. iv. 13, 14. they are but lain down to rest in their beds for a little while, (Ifa. lvii. 2.) in the morning of the refurrection they will awake again, and come forth from their graves. The veffel of honour was but coarse, it had much alloy of base metal in it; it was too weak, too dim and inglorious, for the upper house, whatever lustre it had in the lower one. It was cracked, it was polluted; and therefore must be melted down to be refined, and fashioned more gloriously. Do but wait a while, and you shall see it come forth out of the furnace of earth, vying with the stars in brightness; nay, as the fun when he goeth forth in his might. Have you laid your infant children in the grave? you will fee them again. Your God calls himself the God of your feed; which, according to our Saviour's exposition, secures the glorious refurrection of the body. Wherefore, let the covenant you embraced, for yourself and your babes now in the dust, comfort your heart in the joyful expectation, that, by virtue thereof, they shall be raised up in glory; and that as being no more infants of days, but brought to a full and perfect stature, as is generally supposed. Be not discouraged by reason of a weak and fickly body; there is a day coming when thou shalt be every whit whole. At the refurrection, Timothy shall be no more liable to his often infirmities; his body, that was weak and fickly, even in youth, shall be raised in power, Lazarus shall be healthy and found, his body being raifed incorruptible. Although, perhaps, thy weakness will not allow thee now to go one furlong to meet the Lord in public ordinances, yet the day cometh when thy body shall be no more a clog to thee, but thou shalt meet the Lord in the air, 1 Thess. iv. 17. It will be with the faints coming up from the grave, as with the Israelites, when they came out of Egypt, Psal. cv. 37. There was not one feeble person among their tribes. Hast thou an uncomely, or deformed body? There is a glory within, which will then fet all right without, according to all the defire of thine heart. It shall rife a glorious, beautiful, handsome, and well proportioned body.

Its uncomeliness or deformities may go with it to the grave, but they shall not come back with it O that those, who are now so desirous to be beautiful and handsome, would not be too hasty to effect it with their foolish and finful arts, but wait and study the heavenly art of beautifying the body, by endeavouring now to become all glorious within, with the graces or God's Spirit! This would at length make them admirable and everlasting beauties. Thou must indeed, O believer, grapple with death, and shall get the first fall: but thou shalt rise again, and come off victorious at last. Thou must go down to the grave! but though it be thy long home, it will not be thine everlasting home. Thou wilt not hear the voice of thy friends there; but thou shalt hear the voice of Christ there. Thou mayest be carried thither with mourning, but shalt come up from it rejoicing. Thy friends, indeed, will leave thee there, but thy God will not. What God faid to Jacob, concerning his going down to Egypt, (Gen. xlvi. 3, 4.) he fays to thee, on thy going down to the grave, Fear not to go down-I will go down with thee, and I will also surely bring thee up again. O solid comfort! O glorious hope! Wherefore comfort yourfelves, and one another with these words, I Thess. iv. 18.

Use II. Of terror to all unregenerate men. You who are yet in your natural state, look at this piece of the eternal state; and consider what will be your part in it, if you be not in time brought into the state of grace. Think, O finner, on that day, when the trumpet shall found, at the voice of which the bars of the pit shall be broken asunder, the doors of the grave shall fly open, the devouring depths of the fea shall throw up their dead, the earth cast forth her's; and death every where, in the excess of astonishment, shall let go his prisoners; and thy wretched soul and body shall be reunited, to be summoned before the tribunal of God. Then, if thou hadst a thousand worlds at thy disposal, thou wouldst gladly give them all away, upon condition that thou might est lie still in thy grave, with the hundred part of that ease wherewith thou hast sometimes lien at home on the Lord's day: or, if that cannot be obtained, that thou mightest be but a spectator of the transactions of that day; as thou hast been at some solemn occasions, and rich gospel feasts: or, if even that is not to be purchased, that a mountain or rock might fall on thee, and cover thee from the face of the Lamb. Ah! how are men infatuated, thus to trifle away the precious time of life, in almost as little concern about death, as if they were like the beafts that perish! Some will be telling where their corpses must be laid, while yet they have not feriously considered whether their graves shall be their beds, where they shall awake with joy in the morning of the resurrection; or their prisons, out of which they shall be brought to receive the fearful fentence. Remember, now is your feed-time; and as you fow, fo you shall reap. God's feed-time begins at death; and at the refurrection, the bodies of the wicked, that were fown full of fins, that lie down with them in the dust, (Job xx. 11.) shall spring up again, sinful, wretched, and vile. Your bodies, which are now instruments of sin, the Lord will lay aside for the fire at death, and bring them forth for the fire at the resurrection. That body, which is not now employed in God's fervice, but is abused by uncleanness and lasciviousness, will then be brought forth in all its vileness, thenceforth to lodge with unclean spirits. The body of the drunkard shall then stagger, by reason of the wine of the wrath of God poured out on him, and poured into him, without mixture. Those who now please themselves in their revellings, will reel to and fro at another rate; when, instead of their fongs and music, they shall hear the found of the last trumpet. Many toil their bodies for worldly gain, who will be loath to distress them for the benefit of their fouls: by labour, unreasonably hard, they will quite disfit them for the service of God; and when they have done, will reckon it a very good reason for shifting duty, that they are already tired out with other business: but the day cometh, when they will be made to abide a yet greater distress. Many will go several miles for back and belly, who will not go half the way for the good of their immortal fouls; many are fickly and unable on the Lord's day, who will be tolerably

well all the rest of the week. But when that trumpet founds, the dead shall find their feet, and none shall be missing in that congregation. When the bodies of the faints shall shine as the sun, frightful will the looks of their persecutors be. Fearful will their condition be, who shut up the saints in nasty prisons, stigmatized, burned them to ashes, hanged them, and stuck up their heads and hands in public places, to frighten others from the way of righteousness, which they suffered for. Many faces, now fair, will then gather blackness. They shall be no more admired and caressed for that beauty, which has a worm at the root, that will cause it to issue in loathsomeness and deformity. Ah! what is that beauty, under which there lurks a monftrous, deformed, and graceless heart? What but a forry paint, a flight varnish, which will leave the body so much the more ugly, before that flaming fire, in which the Judge shall be revealed from beaven, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel, 2 Thes. i. 7, 8. They shall be stripped of all their ornaments, and not have a rag to cover their nakedness: their carcases-shall be an abhorring to all flesh, and serve as a foil to fet off the beauty and glory of the righteous, and make it appear the brighter.

Now is the time to feek a part in the refurrection of the just: which, if you would do, unite with Jesus Christ by faith, rising spiritually from sin, and glorifying God with your bodies. He is the resurrection and the life, John xi. 25. If your bodies be members of Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, they shall certainly arise in glory. Get into this ark now, and you shall come forth with joy into the new world. Rife from your fins; cast away these grave-cloaths, putting off your former lusts. How can any one imagine, that those who continue dead while they live, shall come forth at the last day unto the resurrection of life? That will be the privilege of those who, having first consecrated their fouls and bodies to the Lord by faith, glorify him with their bodies as well as their fouls; living and acting to him, and for him, yea, and fuffering for him too, when

he calls them to it.

H E A D IV.

The General JUDGMENT.

Matth. xxv. 31, 32, 33, 34, 41. 46. When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shephered divideth his sheep from his goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right-hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed, &c.—Unto them on the left-hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, &c. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

THE dead being raifed, and those found alive at the coming of the Judge changed, follows the general judgment, plainly and awfully described in this portion of Scripture; in which we shall take notice of the following particulars: (1.) The coming of the Judge, When the Son of man shall come in his glory, &c. The Judge is Jesus Christ, the Son of man; the same by whose almighty power, as he is God, the dead will be raised. He is also called the King, ver. 34. the judging of the world being an act of the royal Mediator's kingly office. He will come in glory: glorious in his own person, and having a glorious retinue, even all the holy angels with him, to minister unto him at this great folemnity. (2.) The mounting the tribunal. He is a King, and therefore it is a throne, a glorious throne, He shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ver. 31. (3.) The appearance of the parties. These are all nations; all and every one, small and great, of whatever nation, who ever were, are, or shall be on the face of the earth: all shall be gathered before him; summoned before his tribunal. (4.) The forting of them. He shall separate the elect sheep, and reprobate goats, setting each party by themselves: as a shepherd, who feeds his sheep and goats together all the day, separates them

at night, ver. 32. The godly he will fet on his righthand, as the most honourable place; the wicked on the left, ver. 33. yet so as they shall be both before him, ver. 32. It feems to be an allusion to a custom in the Jewish courts, in which one fat at the right-hand of the judge, who wrote the fentence of absolution, another at their left, who wrote the fentence of condemnation. (5.) The fentencing of the parties, and that according to their works; the righteous being absolved, and the wicked condemned, ver. 34.41. Lastly, The execution of both fentences, in the driving away of the wicked into hell, and carrying the godly to heaven, ver. 46.

Doct. There shall be a general judgment.

This doctrine I shall, (1.) confirm; (2.) explain; and, (3.) apply.

I. For confirmation of this great truth, that there

shall be a general judgment.

First, It is evident from plain Scripture testimonies. The world has in all ages been told of it. Enoch, before the flood, taught it in his prophecy, related Jude 14, 15. Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his faints, to execute judgment upon all, &c. Daniel describes it, chap. vii. 9, 10. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as fnow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thoufand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. The apostle is very express, Acts xvii. 31. He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man robom he hath ordained. See Mat. xvi. 27. 2 Cor. v. 10. 2 Theff. i. 7-10. Rev. xx. 11-15. God has not only faid it, but he has sworn it, Rom. xiv. 10, 11. We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So that the truth of God is most folemnly pledged for it.

Secondly, The rectoral justice and goodness of God, the fovereign Ruler of the world, necessarily require it,

inalmuch as they require its being well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked. Yet we often see wickedness exalted, while truth and righteousness fall in the streets; piety oppressed, while profanity and irreligion do triumph. This is so very common, that every one who fincerely embraceth the way of holiness, must and doth lay his account with the loss of all he has, which the world can take away from him, Luke xiv. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and fisters, yea, and bis own life also, he cannot be my disciple. But it is inconfishent with the justice and goodness of God, that the affairs of men should always continue in the state which they appear in, from one generation to another; and that every man should not be rewarded according to his works: and fince that is not done in this life, there must be a judgment to come; Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you: and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. There will be a day in which the tables will be turned; and the wicked shall be called to an account for all their fins, and fuffer the due punishment of them; and the pious shall be prosperous: for, as the apostle argues for the happy refurrection of the faints, If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable, 1 Cor. xv. 19. It is true, God sometimes punisheth the wicked in this life, that men may know he is a God that judgeth in the earth: yet much wickedness remains unpunished, and undiscovered; to be a pledge of the judgment to come. If none of the wicked was punished here, they would conclude that God had utterly forsaken the earth: if all of them were punished in this life, men would be apt to think that there is no afterreckoning. Therefore, in the wisdom of God, some are punished now, and some not. Sometimes the Lord fmites finners in the very act of fin; to shew unto the world that he is witness to all their wickedness, and will call them to an account for it. Sometimes he delays long ere he strikes, that he may discover to the world that he forgets not men's ill deeds, though he

does not presently punish them. Besides all this, the sins of many out-live them; and the impure sountain, by them opened, runs long after they are dead and gone. As in the case of Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes, whose sin did run on all along unto the end of that unhappy kingdom, 2 Kings xvii. 22, 23. The children of Israel walked in all the sins of Feroboam, which he did, they departed not from them, until the Lord removed

Ifrael out of his fight.

Thirdly, The refurrection of Christ is a certain proof that there shall be a day of judgment. This argument Paul useth to convince the Athenians that Jesus Christ will be the Judge of the world; Whereof, fays he, he bath given affurance to all men, in that he hath raifed him from the dead, Acts xvii. 31. The Judge is already named, his patent written and fealed, yea, and read before all men, in his rifing again from the dead. He hath, by raising Christ from the dead, exhibited his credentials as Judge of the world. When, in the days of his humiliation, he was cited before a tribunal, arraigned, accused, and condemned by men, he plainly told them of this judgment, and that he himfelf would be the Judge, Mat. xxvi. 64. Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right-hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. And now he is raised from the dead, though condemned as a blasphemer on this very head, is it not an undeniable proof from heaven of the truth of what he afferted? Moreover, this was one of the great ends of Christ's death and refurrection; For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord, (i. e. The Lord Judge, as is evident from the context) both of the dead and of the living, Rom. xiv. o.

Lastly, Every man bears about with him a witness to this within his own breast, Rom. ii. 15. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another. There is a tribunal erected within every man, where conscience is accuser, witness, and judge, binding over the sinner to the judgment of God. This sills the most prossigate.

wretches with horror, and inwardly ftings them, upon the commission of some attrocious crime; in effect summoning them to answer for it before the Judge of the quick and dead. And thus it doth, even when the crime is fecret, and hid from the eyes of the world. It reacheth those whom the laws of men cannot reach, because of their power or crast. Men slee from the judgment of their fellow-creatures; yet, go where they will, conscience, as the supreme Judge's officer, still keeps hold of them, referving them in its chains, to the judgment of the great day. And whether they escape punishment from men, or fall by the hand of public justice, when they perceive death's approach, they hear from within of this after-reckoning; being constrained to hearken thereto, in these the most serious minutes of their lives. If there be some, in whom nothing of this doth appear, we have no more ground thence to conclude against it, than we have to conclude, that because some men do not groan, therefore they have no pain; or that dying is a mere jest, because there have been some who seemed to make little else of it. A good face may be put upon an ill conscience: the more hopeless men's case is, they reckon it more their interest to make no reflections on their state and case. But every one, who will confult himfelf ferioufly, will find in himself the witness of the judgment to come. Even the heathens wanted not a notion of it, though. mixed with fictions of their own. Hence, though fome of the Athenians, when they heard of the refurrection of the dead, mocked, Acts xvii. 32. yet there is no account of their mocking when they heard of the general judgment, verse 31.

II. For explication, the following particulars may ferve to give some view of the nature and transactions of that

great day.

I. God shall judge the world by Jesus Christ. He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, Acts xvii. 31. The Psalmist tells us that God is Judge himself, Psal. 1. 6. The holy blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is Judge, in respect of judiciary authority, dominion, and power:

but the Son incarnate is the Judge, in respect of dispensation, and special exercise of that power. The judgment shall be exercised or performed by him, as the royal Mediator; for he has a delegated power of judgment from the Father, as his Servant, his King, whom he hath fet upon his holy hill of Zion, (Pfal. ii. 6.) and to whom he hath committed all judgment, John v. 22. This is a part of the Mediator's exaltation, given him in consequence of his voluntary humiliation, Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10. He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, (i. e. power and authority over all, to wit,) that at (or in) the name of Jesus, (not the name Jesus; that is not the name above every name, being common to others, as to Justus, Col. iv. 11. and Joshua, Heb. iv. 8.) every knee shall bow. The which is explained by the apostle himself of standing before the judgment-feat of Christ, Rom. xiv. 10, 11. So he who was judged and condemned of men, thall be the Judge of men and angels.

II. Jesus Christ, the Judge, descending from heaven into the air, (I Thess. iv. 16, 17. shall come in the clouds of beaven with power and great glory, Mat. xxiv. 30. This his coming will be a mighty furprize to the world, which will be found in deep fecurity; foolish virgins fleeping, and the wife flumbering. There will then be much luxury and debauchery in the world, little fobriety and watchfulness; a great throng of business, but a great scarcity of faith and holiness. As it was in the days of Noah, so also shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark: and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewife also as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they fold, they planted, they builded .-Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed, Luke xvii. 26, 27, 28. 30. The coming of the Judge will furprise some at markets, buying and felling; others at table, cating and drinking, and making merry; others bufy with their new plantings; some building

new houses; nay, some's wedding-day will be their own, and the world's judgment-day. But the Judge cometh! the markets are marred; the buyer throws away what he has bought; the feller cafts down his money; they are raised from the table, and their mirth is extinguished in a moment; though the tree be fet in the earth, the gardener cannot flay to cast the earth about it; the workmen throw away their tools, when the house is half built, and the owner regards it no more; the bridegroom, bride, and guests, must leave the wedding-feast, and appear before the tribunal: for, Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, Rev. i. 7. He shall come most gloriously; for he will come in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels, Mark viii. 38. When he came in the flesh, to die for sinners, he laid afide the robes of his glory, and was despised and rejected of men: but when he comes again, to judge the world, fuch shall be his visible glory and majesty, that it shall cast an eternal vail over all earthly glory, and fill his greatest enemies with fear and dread. Never had prince or potentate in the world fuch a glorious train, as will accompany this Judge: all the holy angels shall come with him, for his honour and service, Then he, who was led to the cross with a band of soldiers, will be gloriously attended to the place of judgment, by (not a multitude of the heavenly hoft, but) the whole host of angels; all his holy angels, says the text.

III. At the coming of the Judge, the summons is given to the parties, by the sound of the last trumpet; at which the dead are raised, and those sound alive changed; of which before, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. Oloud trumpet; that shall be heard at once, in all corners of the earth, and of the sea! O wonderful voice, that will not only disturb those who sleep in the dust, but effectually awaken, rouse them out of their sleep, and raise them from death! Were trumpets sounding now, drums beating, surious soldiers, crying and killing men, women, and children, running and shrieking, the wounded groaning and dying; those who are in the graves would have no more disturbance, than if the world were in most profound peace. Yea, were stormy winds to cast down

the lofty oaks, the feas roar, and swallow up the ships, the most dreadful thunders to go along the heavens, lightenings every where to flash, the earth quake, tremble, open, and swallow up whole cities, and bury multitudes at once; the dead would still enjoy a perfect repose, and sleep soundly in the dust, though their own dust should be thrown out of its place. But at the sound of this trumpet they shall all awake. The morning is come, they can sleep no longer; the time for the dead to be judged: they must get out of their graves,

and appear before the Judge.

IV. The Judge shall sit down on the tribunal; he shall sit on the throne of his glory. He stood before a tribunal on earth, and was condemned as a malefactor: now he shall sit on his own tribunal, and judge the world. He once hung upon the crofs, covered with shame; now he shall sit on the throne of glory. What this throne shall be, whether a bright cloud, or what else, I shall not enquire. Our eyes will answer to that question at length. John saw a great white throne, Rev. xx. 11. His throne, says Daniel, was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire, chap. vii. 9. Whatever it be, doubtless it will be a throne glorious beyond expression; and in comparison with which the most glorious throne on the earth is but a feat on a dunghill; and the fight of it will equally furprize kings, who fat on thrones in this life, and beggars who fat on dunghills. It will be a throne, for stateliness and glory, fuited to the quality of him who shall sit on it. Never had a judge fuch a throne, and never had a throne fuch a Judge on it.

Leaving the discovery of the nature of the throne until that day, it concerns us more nearly to consider what a Judge will sit on it; a point in which we are not left to uncertain conjectures. The Judge on the throne will be, (1.) A visible Judge, visible to our bodily eyes, Rev. i. 7. Every eye shall see him. When God gave the law on mount Sinai, the people saw no similitude, only they heard a voice: but when he calls the world to an account, how they have observed his law, the man Christ being Judge, we shall see our Judge

with our eyes, either to our eternal comfort, or to our eternal confusion, according to the entertainment which we give him now. That very body which was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem, between two thieves, shall then be seen on the throne, shining in glory. We now fee him fymbolically, in the facrament of his fupper: the faints fee him by an eye of faith: then all shall fee him with the eyes now in their heads. (2.) A Judge having full authority and power to render unto every one according to his works. Christ, as God, hath authority of himself; and as Mediator he hath a judicial power and authority, which his Father has invested him with, according to the covenant between the Father and the Son, for the redemption of finners. His divine glory will be a light, by which all men shall see clearly to read his commission, for his great and honourable employment. All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth, Matt. xxviii. 18. He hath the keys of hell and of death, Rev. i. 18. There can be no appeal from his tribunal: sentence once passed there, must stand for ever; there is no reversing it. All appeals are from an inferior to a superior court: but when God gives fentence against a man, where can he find a higher court to bring his process to? This judgment is the Mediator's judgment; and therefore the last judgment. If the interceffor be against us, who can be for us? If Christcondemn us, who will absolve us? (3) A Judge of infinite wisdom. His eyes will pierce into, and clearly discern the most intricate cases. His omniscience qualifies him for judging of the most retired thoughts, as well as of words and works. The most fubtle finner shall not be able to outwit him, nor, by any artful management, to palliate the crime. He is the fearcher of hearts, to whom nothing can he hid or perplexed; but all things are naked and open to his eyes, Heb. iv. 13. (5.) A most just Judge; a Judge of perfect integrity. He is the righteous Judge, 2 Tim. iv. 8. and his throne a great white throne, Rev. xx. 11. from whence no judgment shall proceed, but what is most pure and spotless. The Thebans painted justice blind, and without hands; for judges ought not to refpect persons, nor take bribes. The Areopagites judged in the dark, that they might not regard who spoke, but what was spoken. With the Judge on this throne there will be no respect of persons; he will neither regard the person of the rich nor of the poor: but just judgment shall go forth in every one's cause. Lastly, The omnipotent Judge; able to put his fentence in execution. The united force of devils and wicked men will be altogether unable to withstand him. They cannot retard the execution of the sentence against them one moment; far less can they stop it altogether. Thousand thousands (of angels) minister unto him, Dan. vii. 10. and by the breath of his mouth he can drive the cursed

herd whither he pleafeth.

V. The parties shall appear. These are men and devils. Although the last, the fallen angels were, from the first moment of their sinning, subjected to the wrath of God, and were cast down to hell, and whereever they go, they carry their hell about with them: yet it is evident, that they are reserved unto judgment, (2 Pet. ii. 4.) namely, unto the judgment of the great day, Jude 6. then they shall be solemnly and publicly judged, 1 Cor. vi. 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? At that day they shall answer for their trade of finning, and tempting to fin, which they have been carrying on from the beginning. Then many a hellish brat, which Satan has laid down at the faints door, but not adopted by them, shall be laid at the door of the true father of it, that is the devil. And he shall receive the due reward of all the dishonour which he has done to God, and of all the mischief which he has done to men. Those-wicked spirits, now in chains (though not in fuch firait custody, but that they go about like roaring lions, feeking whom they may devour) shall then receive their final fentence, and be shut up in their den, namely, in the prison of hell; where they shall be held in extreme and unspeakable torment, through all eternity, Rev. xx. 10. And the devil, that deceived them, was cast into the take of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. In prospect of which the devils faid to Christ, Art thou come hither to

torment us before the time ? Mat. viii. 29.

But what we are chiefly concerned to take notice of. is the case of men at that day. All men must appear before this tribunal. All of each fex, of every age, quality, and condition; the great and fmall, noble and ignoble: none are excepted. Adam and Eve, with all their fons and daughters (every one who has had, or to the end of the world shall have a living foul united to a body), will make up this great congregation. Even those who refused to come to the throne of grace, shall be forced to the bar of justice: for there can be no hiding from the all-feeing Judge, no flying from him who is present every where, no resisting of him, who is armed with almighty power. We must all stand before the judgment-feat of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 10. Before him shall be gathered all nations, fays the text. This is to be done by the ministry of angels. By them shall the elect be gathered, Mark xiii. 27, Then shall be fend kis angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four zeinds. And they also shall gather the reprobate, Mat. xiii. 40, 41. So shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth his augels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. From all corners of the world shall the inhabitants thereof be gathered, unto the place where he shall fet his throne for judgment.

VI. There shall be a separation made between the righteous and the wicked; the fair company of the elect sheep being set on Christ's right hand, and the reprobate goats on his lest. There is no necessity to wait for this separation till the trial be over; since the parties will rise out of their graves with plain outward marks of distinction, as was mentioned before. The separation seems to be effected by that double gathering before mentioned; the one of the elect, Mark xiii. 27. the other of them that do iniquity, Matth. xiii. 41. The elect, being caught up together in the clouds, meet the Lord in the air, (1 Thess. iv. 17.) and so are set on his right-hand; and the reprobate lest on the earth (Mat. xxiv. 40.) upon the Judge's lest hand.

Here is now a total separation of two parties, who were always opposite to each other in their principles, aims, and manner of life, who, when together, were a burden the one to the other, under which the one groaned, and the other raged: but now they are freely parted, never to come together any more. The iron and clay (I allude to Dan. ii. 41. 43.) which could never mix, are quite separated; the one being drawn up into the air, by the attractive virtue of the stone cut out of the mountain, namely, Jesus Christ; and the

other left upon its earth, to be trod under foot. Now let us look to the right-hand, and there shall we fee a glorious company of faints, shining as so many stars in their orbs; and with a chearful countenance beholding him who fitteth upon the throne. Here will be two wonderful fights, which the world never faw. (1.) A great congregation of faints, in which there will not be so much as one hypocrite. There was a bloody Cain in Adam's family, a curfed Ham in Noah's family, in the ark; a treacherous Judas in Christ's own family: but in that company there will be none but sealed ones, members of Christ, having all one Father. This is a fight reserved for that day. (2.) All the godly upon one fide. Seldom or ever do the faints on earth make fuch harmony, but there are fome jarring strings among them. It is not to be expected, that men who fee but in part, though they be all going to one city, should agree as to every step in the way: No, we must not look for it in this state of imperfection. But at that day, Paul and Barnabas shall meet in peace and unity, though once the contention was fo Tharp between them, that they departed afunder, the one from the other, Acts xv. 39. There shall be no more divisions, no more separate standing amongst those who belong to Christ. All the godly, of the different parties, shall then be upon one fide; feeing, whatever were their differences in leffer things, while in the world, yet even then they met and concentered all in one Lord Jefus Chrift, by a true and living faith, and in the one way of holiness, or practical godliness. And naughty hypocrites, of whatever party, shall be led forth with the workers of iniquity.

Look to the left-hand, and there you will fee the curfed goats (all the wicked ones from Cain to the last ungodly persons who shall be in the world) gathered together into one most miserable congregation. There are many affemblies of the wicked now; then there shall be but one: yet all of them shall be present there, brought together as one herd for the flaughter, bellowing and roaring, weeping and howling for the miseries come, and that are coming on them. (And remember, thou shalt not be a mere spectator, to look at these two so different companies; but must thyself take thy place in one of the two, and shalt share with the company, whatever hand it be upon.) Those who now abhor no fociety fo much, as that of the faints, would then be glad to be allowed to get in among them; though it were but to lie among their feet. But then not one tare shall be found with the wheat; he will throughly purge his floor. Many of the right-hand men of this world, will be left-hand men in that day. Many, who must have the door on the right-hand of those who are better than they, (if the righteous be more excellent than his neighbour) shall then be turned to the left-hand, as most despicable wretches. O how terrible will this feparation be to the ungodly! how dreadful will this gathering them together into one company be! what they will not believe they will then fee, namely, that but few are faved. They think it enough now to be neighbour like, and can fecurely follow the multitude: but the multitude on the left-hand will yield them no comfort. How will it sting the ungodly Christian, to see himself set on the same hand with Turks and Pagans? How will it gall profane Protestants, to stand with idolatrous Papists; praying people with their profane neighbours, who mocked at religious exercises; formal professors, strangers to the new-birth, and the power of godliness, with persecutors! Now there are many opposite societies in the world: but then all the ungodly shall be in one society. And how dreadful will the faces of companions in fin be to one another there! What doleful thrieks, when the whoremonger and his whore shall meet; when the drunkards,

who have had many a jovial day together, shall see one another in the face; when the husband and wife,. the parents and children, masters and servants, and neighbours, who have been snares and stumbling-blocks to one another, to the ruin of their own fouls, and those of their relatives, shall meet again in that miferable fociety? then will there be curses instead of falutations; and tearing of themselves, and raging against one another, instead of the wonted embraces.

VII. The parties shall be tried. The trial cannot be difficult, in regard the Judge is omniscient, and nothing can be hid from him. But, that his righteous judgment may be made evident to all, he will fet the hidden things of darkness in the clearest light at that

trial, 1 Cor. iv. 5.

Men shall be tried, first, upon their works; for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccles. xii. 14. The Judge will try every man's conversation, and fet his deeds done in the body, with all the circumstances thereof, in a true light. Then will many actions, commended and applauded of men, as good and just, be discovered to have been evil and abominable in the fight of God: and many works now condemned in the world, will be approved and commended by the great Judge, as good and just. Secret things will be brought to light; and what was hid from the view of the world, shall be laid open. Wickedness, which hath kept its lurking place in spight of all human search, will then be brought forth to the glory of God, and the confufion of impenitent finners, who hid it. The world appears now very vile in the eyes of those who are exercifed to godliness: and it will then appear a thoufand times more vile, when that which is done of men in fecret comes to be discovered. Every good action shall then be remembered; and the hidden religion, and good works, most industriously concealed by the saints, from the eyes of men, shall no more lie hid: for though the Lord will not allow men to proclaim every man his own goodness, yet he himself will do it in due time. Secondly, Their words shall be judged,

Mat. xii. 37. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Not a word spoken for God and his cause in the world, from love to himfelf, shall be forgotten. They are all kept in remembrance, and shall be brought forth as evidences of faith, and of an interest in Christ, Mal. iii. 16, 17. Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him-and they shall be mine, faith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels. And the tongue, which did run at random, shall then confess to God; and the speaker shall find it to have been followed, and every word noted, that dropped from the unfanctified lips. Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, Mat. xii. 36. And if they shall give account of idle words, that is, words spoken to no good purpose, neither for God's glory, one's own, nor one's neighbour's good; how much more shall men's wicked words, their finful oaths, curses, lies, filthy communications, and bitter words, be called over again in that day? The tongues of many shall then fall upon themselves, and ruin them. Thirdly, Men's thoughts shall be brought into judgment: the Judge will make manifest the counsels of the heart, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Thoughts go free from man's judgment, but not from the judg-ment of the heart-learching God, who knows men's thoughts, without the help of figns to discern them by. The fecret springs of men's actions will then be brought to light; and the fins, that never came further than the heart, will then be laid open. O what a figure will man's corrupt nature make, when his infide is turned out, and all his speculative impurities are exposed! The rottenness that is within many a whited fepulchre, the speculative filthiness and wantonness, murder and malignity, now lurking in the hearts of men, as in the chambers of imagery, will then be discovered, and what good was in the hearts of any shall no more lie concealed. If it was in their hearts to build a house to the Lord, they shall hear that they did well that it was in their heart.

This trial will be righteous and impartial, accurate and searching, clear and evident. The Judge is the righteous Judge, and he will do right to every one. He has a just balance for good and evil actions, and for honest and salse hearts. The sig-leas cover of hypocrify will then be blown aside, and the hypocrite's nakedness will appear; as when the Lord came to judge Adam and Eve in the cool (or, as the word is, in the wind) of the day, Gen. iii. 8. The fire (which tries things most exquisitely) shall try every man's work, of what sort it is, I Cor. iii. 13. Man's judgment is often perplexed and consused: but here the whole process shall be clear and evident, as written with a sun-beam. It shall be clear to the Judge, to whom no case can be intricate; to the parties, who shall be convinced, Jude 15. And the multitudes on both sides shall see the Judge is clear when he judgeth; for then the heavens shall declare his righteousness, in the audience of all the world: and so it shall be universally known, Psal. 1. 6.

On these accounts it is, that this trial is held out in the Scripture under the notion of opening of books; and men are said to be judged out of those things written in the books, Rev. xx. 12. The Judge of the world, who infallibly knoweth all things, hath no need of books to be laid before him, to prevent mistakes in any point of law or sact: but the expression points at his proceeding as most nice, accurate, just, and well grounded, in every step of it. Now there are sour books which shall be

opened in that day.

First, The book of God's remembrance, or omniscience, Mal. iii. 16. This is an exact record of every man's state, thoughts, words, and deeds, good or evil: it is, as it were, a day-book, in which the Lord puts down all that passeth in men's hearts, lips, and lives; and it is a-filling up every day that one lives. In it are recorded men's sins and good works, secret and open, with all their circumstances. Here are registered all their privileges, temporal and spiritual mercies, often made ready to their hand; the checks, admonitions, and rebukes, given by teachers, neighbours, afflictions, and men's own consciences; every thing in its due or

der. This book will ferve only as a bill of indictment, in respect of the ungodly: but it will be for another use in respect of the godly, namely, for a memorial of their good. The opening of it is the Judge's bringing to light what is written in it; the reading, as it were, of the bill and memorial respectively, in their

hearing. Secondly, The book of conscience will be opened, which will be as a thousand witnesses to prove the fact, Rom. i. 15. Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness. Conscience is a cenfor, going with every man wherever he goes, taking an account of his deeds done in the body, and, as it were, noting them in a book. Much is written in it, which cannot be read now; the writing of conscience being, in many cases, like to that which is made with the juice of lemons, not to be read till it be held before the fire; but then men shall read it clearly and distinctly: the fire, which is to try every man's work, will make the book of conscience legible in every point. Though the book be fealed now (the conscience blind, dumb, and deaf), the feals will then be broken, and the book opened. There shall be no more a silent conscience, and far less a seared conscience, amongst all the ungodly crew: but their confciences shall be most quick-sighted, and most lively, in that day. None shall then call good evil, or evil good. Ignorance of what fin is, and what things are fins, will have no place among them: and the fubtle reasonings of men, in favour of their lusts, will then be for ever baffled by their own consciences. None shall have the favour (if I may so speak) of lying under the soft cover of delufion: but they shall all be convicted by their conscience. Whether they will or not, they must look on this book, read, be confounded, and stand speechless, knowing that nothing is charged upon them by mistake; fince this is a book which was always in their own custody. Thus shall the Judge make every man see himself in the glass of his own conscience, which will make quick work.

Thirdly, The book of the law shall be opened. This book is the standard and rule, by which is known what

is right and what is wrong; as also, what sentence is to be paffed accordingly, on those who are under it. As to the opening of the book, as a statute, which shews what is fin, and what is duty, it agrees with the opening of the book of conscience: for conscience is set, by the sovereign Lawgiver, in every man's breast, to be his private teacher, to shew him the law; and his private pastor, to make application of the same; and at that day it will be perfectly fit for its office: So that the conscience, which is most stupid now, shall then read to the man most accurate, but dreadful lectures on the law. But what feems (mainly at least) pointed at by the opening of this book, is the opening of that part of it which determines the reward of men's works. Now the law promiseth life, upon perfect obedience: but none can be found on the right-hand, or on the left, who will pretend to that, when once the book of conscience is opened. It threateneth death upon disobedience, and will effectually bring it, upon all under its dominion. And this part of the book of the law, determining the reward of men's works, is opened only to shew what must be the portion of the ungodly, and that there they may read their fentence before it be pronounced. But it is not opened for the fentence of the faints; for no fentence absolving a finner could ever be drawn out of it. The law promifeth life, not as it is a rule of actions, but as a covenant of works: therefore innocent man could not have demanded life upon his obedience, till the law was reduced into the form of a covenant: as was shewn before. But the faints having been in this life brought under a new covenant, namely, the covenant of grace, were dead to the law as a covenant of works, and it was dead to them. Wherefore, as they shall not now have any fears of death from it; fo they can have no hopes of life from it, fince they are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. vi. 14. but for their fentence another book is opened; of which in the next place.

Thus the book of the law is opened, to sentence against all those on the left-hand: and by it they will clearly see the justice of the judgment against them,

and how the Judge proceeds therein according to law. Nevertheless, there will be this difference, namely, that those who had only the natural law, and lived not under any special revelation, shall be judged by that law of nature which they had in their hearts; which law declares, That they which commit such things (as they will stand convicted of) are worthy of death, Rom. i. 32. but those who had the written law, to whom the word of God came, sounding in the visible church, shall be judged by that written law. So says the apostle, Rom. ii. 12. For as many as have sinned without (the written) law; shall also perish without (the written) law; and as many as have sinned in the law, (i. e. under the written

law) shall be judged by the (written) law.

Lafily, Another book shall be opened, which is the book of life, Rev. xx. 12. In this the names of all the elect are written, as Christ said to his disciples, Luke x. 20. Your names are written in heaven. This book contains God's gracious and unchangeable purpose to bring all the elect to eternal life, and that, in order thereto, they be redeemed by the blood of his Son, effectually called. justified, adopted, sanctified, and raised up by him at the last day without sin. It is now lodged in the Mediator's hand, as the book of the manner of the kingdom: and having perfected the work which the Father gave him to do, he shall, on the great day, produce and open the book, and present the persons therein-named faultless before the presence of his glory, Jude, ver. 24. Not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Eph. v. 27. Not one named in the book will be missing. They shall be found qualified, according to the order of the book, redeemed, called, justified, fanctified, raised up without fpot: what remains, then, but, according to the fame book, they obtain the great end, namely, ever-lasting life? This may be gathered from this precious promise, Rev. iii. 5. He that overcometh, the same shall be cloathed in white raiment, (being raifed in glory) and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess bis name (it shall be, as it were, read out among the rest of God's elect) before my Father, and before his angels. Here is the ground of the faint's absolution,

and the ground of the bleffed fentence which they shall receive. The book of life being opened, it will be known to all who are elected, and who are not. Thus

far of the trial of the parties.

VIII. Then shall the Judge pronounce this blessed sentence on the saints, Come, ye bleffed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, Mat. xxv. 34. It is most probable, that the man Christ will pronounce it with an audible voice; which not only all the faints, but all the wicked likewife, shall hear and understand. Who can conceive the inexpressible joy with which these happy ones will hear these words? Who can imagine that fulness of joy which will be poured into their hearts, with these words reaching their ears? And who can conceive how much of hell shall break forth into the hearts of all the ungodly crew, by these words of heaven? It is certain that this fentence shall be pronounced before the sentence of damnation, Mat. xxv. 34. 41. Then Shall the King say to them on his right-hand, Come, ye bleffed, &c. Then shall he also say to them on the left-hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, &c. There is no need of this order, that the faints may, without fear or affrightment, hear the other sentence on the reprobate: they who are raised in glory, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, presented without spot, and whose sou's (for the far greater part of them) have been fo long in heaven before, shall not be capable of any fuch fear. But hereby they will be orderly brought in to fit in judgment, as Christ's asfessors, against the ungodly, whose torment will be aggravated by it. It will be a hell to them to be kept out of hell, till they see the doors of heaven opened to receive the faints, who once dwelt in the fame world with them, and perhaps in the same country, parish, or town, and fat under the fame ministry with themselves. Thus will they fee heaven afar off, to make their hell the hotter: like that unbelieving lord, 2 Kings viii. 20. They shall see the plenty with their eyes, but shall not eat thereof. Every word of the bleffed sentence shall be like an envenomed arrow shot into their hearts, while they see what they have lost, and from thence gather what they are to expect.

This fentence paffeth on the faints according to their works, Rev. xx. 12. but not for their works, nor for their faith, as if eternal life were merited by them. The fentence itself overthrows this absurd conceit. The kingdom which they are called to, was prepared for them from the foundation of the world; not left to be merited by themselves, who were but of yesterday. They inherit it as fons, and not procure it to themselves as servants do the reward of their work. They were redeemed by the blood of Christ, and cloathed with spotless righteousness, which is the proper cause of the ientence. They were also qualified for heaven, by the fanctification of his Spirit; and hence it is according to their works: fo that the ungodly world shall fee now, that the Judge of the quick and dead does good to them who were good. Therefore it is added to the fentence, For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, &c. ver. 35, 36. which doth not denote the ground, but the evidence of their right to heaven; as if a Judge fhould fay, he absolves a man pursued for debt; for the witnesses depose that it is paid already. So the apostle says, I Cor. x. 5. With many of them God was not well pleased, for they were over-thrown in the wildernels. Their overthrow in the wilderness was not the ground of God's displeasure with them, but it was an evidence of it. And thus our Lord teacheth us the necessary connection between glory and good works, namely, works evangelically good; works having a respect to Jesus Christ, and done out of faith in him, and love to him, without which they will not be regarded in that day. And the faints will fo far be judged according to fuch works, that the degrees of glory amongst them shall be according to these works: for it is an eternal truth, He that foweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, 2 Cor. ix. 6.

Thus shall the good works of the godly have a glorious, but a gratuitous reward; a reward of grace, not of debt, which will fill them with wonder at the riches of free grace, and the Lord's condescending to take any notice, especially such public notice of their poor worthless works: which seems to be the import of what they are said to answer, saving, Lord, when save thee an.

Of the general Judgment. Head IV.

bungred, &c. ver. 37, 38, 39. And may they not justly wonder to fee themselves set down to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and hear him acknowledge a dinner or supper, a little meat or drink, (such as they had) which they gave to a hungry or thirsty member of Christ, for his fake? O plentiful harvest, following upon the feed of good works! Rivers of pleafures, in exchange for a cup of cold water, given to a disciple in the name of a disciple! eternal mansions of glory, in exchange for a night's lodging given to a faint, who was a stranger! everlasting robes of glory in exchange for a new coat, or (it may be) an old one, bestowed on fome faint, who had not necessary cloathing! a visit to a sick faint, repaid by Christ himself, coming in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels! a visit made to a poor prisoner, for the cause of Christ, repaid with a vifit from the Judge of all, taking away the visitant with him to the palace of heaven, there to be ever with himself; these things will be matter of everlafting wonder; and should stir up all to sow liberally in time, while the feed time of good works doth last. But it is Christ's stamp on good works, that puts a value on them, in the eye of our gracious God; which feems to be the import of our Lord's, reply, verse 40. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

IX. Now, the faints having received their own fentence, they shall judge the world, I Cor. vi. 2, 3. This was not fulfilled, when the empire became Christian, and Christians were made magnifrates. No, the Psalmist tells us, This honour have all the faints, Pfal. cxlix. 9. And the apostle, in the forecited place, adds, If the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters. Know ye not that we shall judge angels? Being called, they come to receive their kingdom, in the view of angels and men: they go, as it were, from the bar to the throne: To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, Rev. iii: 21. They shall not only judge the world, in Christ their Head, by way of communion with him, by their works compared with them of the ungodly, or by way of testimony against them; but they shall be affessors to Jesus Christ the Judge, giving their voice against them, consenting to his judgment as just, and saying Amen to the doom pronounced against all the ungodly: as is faid to the faints, upon the judgment of the great whore, Rev. xix. 1, 2. Hallelujah—for true and righteous are his judgments. Thus the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning of the refurrection, Psal. xlix. 14. Then, and not till then, shall that be fully accomplished in Psalm cxlix. 6-9. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the Heathen, and punishments upon the people—this honour have all his faints. O! what a strange turn of affairs will appear here! what an aftonishing fight will it be, to see wicked churchmen and statesmen, standing as criminals before the faints, whom fometimes they condemned as heretics, rebels, and traitors! to fee men of riches and power fland pale faced before those whom they oppressed! to fee the mocker stand trembling before those he mocked! the worldly wife man before those whom he accounted fools! Then shall the despised faces of the saints be dreadful faces to the wicked: and those, who sometimes were the fong of the drunkards, shall be a terror to them. All wrongs must be righted at length, and every one set in his proper place.

X. The Judge will pronounce the fentence of damnation on all the ungodly multitude. Then shall be say also unto them on the left-hand, Depart from me, ye curfed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, verse 41. Fearful doom! And that from the same mouth from whence proceeded the sentence of absolution before. It was an aggravation of the misery of the Jews, when their city was destroyed, that they were ruined by one who was accounted the darling of the world. O what an aggravation of the misery of the wicked will it be, that Christ will pronounce this sentence also! to hear the curse from mount Zion, must needs be most terrible. To be damned by him who came to save sinners, must be double damnation. But thus it will be. The Lamb of God shall roar, as a

lion, against them: he shall excommunicate, and cast them out of his presence for ever, by a sentence from the throne, faying, Depart from me, ye curfed: he shall adjudge them to everlasting fire, and the society of devils for evermore. And this fentence also, we suppose, will be pronounced with an audible voice by the man Christ. And all the faints shall fay, Hallelujah, true and righteous are his judgments. None were so compassionate as the faints when on earth, during the time of God's patience: but now that time is at an end; their compassion on the ungodly is swallowed up in joy, in the Mediator's glory, and his executing of just judgment, by which his enemies are made his foot-stool. Though, when on earth, the righteous man wept in fecret places for their pride, and because they would not hear; yet he will rejoice when he feeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, Psal. lviii. 10. No pity shall then be shewn to them from their nearest relations. The godly wife shall applaud the justice of the Judge, in the condemnation of her ungodly hufband: the godly husband shall say Amen to the damnation of her who lay in his bosom: the godly parent shall fay Hallelujah, at the passing of the sentence against their ungodly child: and the godly child shall, from his heart, approve the damnation of his wicked parents, the father who begat him, and the mother who bore him. The fentence is just: they are judged according to their zeorks, Rev. xx. 12.

There is no wrong done them, For I was an hungry, (faith our Lord) and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye cloathed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not, ver. 42, 43. These are not only evidences of their ungodly and cursed state, but most proper causes and grounds of their condemnation: for though good works do not merit salvation, yet evil works merit damnation. Sins of one kind only, namely of omission, are here mentioned; not that these alone shall be then discovered, (for the books lay all open) but because these, though there were no more, are sufficient to damn unpardoned sinners. And if men

are condemned for fins of omission, much more for fins of commission. The omission of works of charity and mercy, is mentioned in particular, to stop the mouths of the wicked; for it is most just, that he have judgment without mercy, that bath shewed no mercy, James is. 13. Taking notice of the omission of acts of charity and mercy, towards the distressed members of Christ, intimates, that it is the judgment of those who have heard of Christ in the gospel, that is principally intended in this portion of Scripture; and that the slighting of Christ will be the great cause of the ruin of those who hear the gospel: but the enmity of the hearts of the wicked, against Christ himself, is discovered, by the entertainment which they now give to his members.

In vain will they fay, When faw we thee an hungred; or athirst? &c. verse 44. For the Lord reckons, and will reckon, the world's unkindness to his people, unkindness to himself; Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me, ver. 45. O meat and drink unhappily spared, when a member of Christ was in need of it! O wretched neglect, that the stranger faint was not taken in! It had been better for them they had quitted their own room, and their own bed, than he had wanted lodging. O curfed cloathing, may the wicked fay, that was in my house, locked up in my chast, or hanging in my wardrobe, and was not brought out to cloath fuch a one! Othat I had stripped myself, rather than he had gone away without cloathing! Cursed business, that diverted me from visiting. fuch a fick faint! O that I had rather watched whole nights with him. Wretch that I was! why did I fit at eafe in my house, when he was in prison, and did not visit him? but now the tables are turned: Christ's fervants shall eat, but I shall be hungry; his fervants shall drink, but I shall be thirsty; they rejoice, but I am ashamed, Isa. lv. 13. They are taken in, but I cast out, and bid to depart; they are cloathed with robes of glory, but I walk naked, and they see my shame, Rev. xvi. 15. they are now raifed up on high, beyond the reach of fickness or pain; but I must now lie down

in forrow, Isa. l. 11. now they will go to the palace of

heaven, but I must go to the prison of hell.

But if our Lord thus refents men's neglecting to help his people under these, and the like distresses, what may they expect who are the authors and instruments of them? If they shall be fed with wrath, who fed them not when they were hungry; what shall become of those who robbed and spoiled them, and took their bread away from them? What a full cup of wrath shall be the portion of those, who were so far from giving them meat or drink, when hungry or thirsty, that they made it a crime for others to entertain them, and made themfelves drunken with their blood! They must lodge with devils for evermore, who took not in the Lord's people, when strangers: then what a lodging shall those have, who drave them out of their own houses, out of their native land, and made them strangers? Men will be condemned for not cloathing them, when naked: then how heavy must the sentence of those be, who have stripped them, and made them go without cloathing? Surely, if not visiting of them in sickness, or in a prison, shall be so severely punished; they shall not escape a most heavy doom, who have cast them into prisons, and have put them under such hardships as have impaired their health, brought fickness on them, and cut short their days in prison, or out of prison.

To put a face upon fuch wicked practices, men will pretend to retain an honour for Christ and religion, while they thus treat his members, walking in his way, and keeping the truth. They are here represented to say, When saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? ver. 44. As if they should say, Our bread, drink, lodging, cloathing, and visits, were indeed refused, but not to Christ; but to a set of men of bad character, men who turned the world upside down, Acts xvii. 6. who troubled Israel, Kings xviii. 17. a phantastic fort of people, having laws diverse from all people; sactious and rebellious, (they did not keep the king's laws) and therefore a very dangerous set of men; it was not for the king's profit to suffer them, Esther

iii. 8. But although men cast iniquity upon the godly, and give them ill names, that they may treat them as criminals, all these pretences will avail them nothing in the great day, before the rightcous Judge, and their own consciences: but the real ground of their enmity against the saints, will be found (to their own conviction) to be their enmity against Christ himself. This seems to be the import of the objection of the damned, ver. 44. and of the answer to it, ver. 45. Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

Lastly, Sentence being passed on both parties, the sull execution of the same follows, ver. 46. These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. The damned shall get no reprieve, but go to their place without delay; they shall be driven away from the judgment-seat, into hell: and the saints shall enter into the King's palace, (Psal. xlv. 15.) namely, into heaven, the seat of the blessed. But our Lord Christ, and his glorious company, shall keep the field that day, and see the backs of all their enemies; for the damned

go off first.

In this day of the Lord, the great day, shall be the general conflagration; by which these visible heavens, the earth, and sea, shall pass away. Not that they shall be annihilated (or reduced to nothing), that is not the operation of fire: but they shall be dissolved and purgedby that fire, from all the effects of fin, and of the curse upon them; and then renewed, and made more glorious and stable. Of this conflagration the apostle Peter speaks, 2 Pet. iii. 10. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. See also ver. 7. 12. And of the renewing of the world, he adds, ver. 13. Nevertheless we, according to his promife, look for new beavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

It feems most agreeable to the Scriptures, and to the nature of the thing, to conceive this conflagration to follow after the general judgment; sentence being passed on both parties before it. And I judge it pro-

bable, that it will happen at the time of putting the fentence in execution against the damned; so as they shall (according to their sentence) depart, and the heavens and the earth pass away, together and at once, at that furious rebuke from the throne, driving away the damned out of the world (in this fire) to the everlafting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Even as, in the deluge, with which the apostle Peter compares the conflagration, or burning of the world, 2 Pet. iii. 6, 7. the world itself, and the wicked upon it, perished together; the same water which destroyed the earth, fweeping away the inhabitants. For it is not likely that the wicked shall at all stand on the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousuess, 2 Pet. iii. 13. and as for this earth, it shall flee arway (which seems to denote a very quick dispatch), and it shall flee from his face who sits on the throne, Rev. xx. 11. And I faw a great white throne, and him that fat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. The execution of the fentence on the wicked is also thus expressed; They shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence, or from the face of the Lord, 2 Thess. i. 9. The original word is the same in both texts, which being compared, seem to say, that these creatures, abused by the wicked, being left to stand as witnesses against them in the judgment, are, after sentence passed on their abusers, made to pass away with them from the face of the Judge. It is true, the flying areay of the earth and heaven is narrated (Rev. xx. 11.) before the judgment; but that does not prove its going before the judgment; any more than the narrating of the judgment, ver. 12. before the refurrection, ver. 13. will prove the judgment to be before it. Further, it is remarkable, in the execution of the fenzence, Rev. xx. 14, 15. that not only the reprobate are cast into the lake, but death and hell are cast into it likewife: all effects of fin, and of the curse, are removed out of the world (for which very cause shall the conflagration be), and they are confined to the place of the damned. Besides all this, it is evident that the end of the world is by the conflagration: and the apostle tells us, I Cor. xy. 24, 25. Then cometh the end, when he

shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. Which last, as it must be done before the end, so it seems not to be done by putting the sentence in execution, passed in the day of judgment against the wicked.

Now, if the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, that are fet forth for an example, Jude 7. was fo dreadful, how terrible will that day be, when the whole world shall be at once in flames! how will wretched worldlings look, when their darling world shall be all on fire? then shall strong castles, and towering palaces, with all their rich furniture, go up together, in one slame, with the lowest cottages. What heart can fully conceive the terror of that day to the wicked, when the whole fabric of heaven and earth shall at once be dissolved by the fire! when that miserable company shall be driven from the tribunal to the pit, with fire within them, and without on every hand of them; and fire awaiting them in the lake: whither the former fire (for ought

which appears) may follow them.

As for the particular place of this judgment, though some point us to the valley of Jehoshophat for it, yet our Lord, who infallibly knew it, being asked the question, by his disciples, Where Lord? only said, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together, Luke xvii. 37. After which answer, it is too much for men to renew the question. As for the time when it shall be, in vain do men search for what the Lord has purposely kept secret, Acts i. 7. It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power. The apostle Paul, after having very plainly described the second coming of Christ, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17: adds, chap. v. 1, 2. But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you: for your selves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. Nevertheless, some, in several ages, have made very bold with the time; and feveral particular years, which are now past, have been given out to the world for the time of the end, by men who have pried into the fe-

crets of God. Time has proclaimed to the world their rathness and folly: and it is probable that they will be no more happy in their conjectures, whose determinate time is yet to come: Let us rest in that he cometh. God hath kept the day hid from us, that we may be every day ready for it, Mat. xxv. 13. Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh. Let us remember, that the last day of our life will determine our state in the last day of the world: and as we die, so shall we be judged

I shall now shut up this subject, with some application

of what has been faid.

Use I. Of comfort to all the faints. Here is abundance of consolation to all who are in the state of grace. Whatever be your afflictions in the world, this day will make up all your losses. Though ye have lien among the pots: yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, covered with filver, and her feathers with yellow gold, Pfal. lxviii. 13. Though the world reproach, judge, and condemn you, the Judge will at that day absolve you, and bring forth your righteousness as the light. The world's fools will then appear to have been the only wife men who were in it. Though the cross be heavy, you may well bear it, in expectation of the crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge will then give you. If the world despise you, and treat you with the utmost contempt, regard it not: the day cometh wherein you shall sit with Christ on his throne: Be not discouraged by reason of manifold temptations. But refift the devil, in confidence of a full and compleat victory; for you shall judge the tempter at last. Though you have hard wrestling now, with the body of sin and death, yet you shall get all your enemies under your feet at length, and be presented faultless before the prefence of his glory. Let not the terror of that day difpirit you, when you think on it. Let those who have flighted the Judge, and continue enemies to him, and to the way of holiness, droop and hang down their heads, when they think of his coming: but lift ye up your heads with joy, for the last day will be your best

day. The Judge is your Head and Husband, your Redeemer, and your Advocate. You must appear before the judgment-feat, but you shall not come into condemnation, John v. 24. His coming will not be against you, but for you. He came in the flesh, to remove the lawful impediments of the spiritual marriage, by his death: he came in the gospel to you, to espouse you to himself: he will come, at the last day, to solemnize the marriage, and take the bride home to his Father's house. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Use. Of terror to all unbelievers. This may ferve to awaken a fecure generation, a world lying in wickedness, as if they were never to be called to an account for it; and flighting the Mediator, as if he were not to judge them. Ah! how few have the lively impressions of the judgment to come! most men live as if what is faid of it, from the word, were but idle tales. The profane lives of many speak the thoughts of it to be far from their hearts, and in very deed make a mock of it before the world, faying, in effect, Where is the promife of his coming? The hypocrify of others, who blind the eyes of the world with a splendid profession, being in appearance Christ's sheep, while they are indeed the devil's goats, proves, that the great separation of the sheep from the goats is very little laid to heart. How do many indulge themselves in secret wickedness, . of which they would be ashamed before witnesses; not confidering, that their most fecret thoughts and actions. will, at that day, be discovered before the great congregation! How eagerly are men's hearts fet on the world, as if it were to be their everlasting habitation! The folemn affemblies, and public ordinances, wherein the Judge is upon a transaction of peace with the criminals, are undervalued: many hearts fwim like feathers in the waters of the fanctuary, that fink like thones to the bottom in cares of this life: they will be very ferious in trifles of this world, and trifle in the most ferious and weighty things of another world. But. O confider the day that is approaching, in which Christ will come to judgment; the world shall be summoned, by the found of the last trumpet, to appear before his, tribunal. The Judge will fit on his throne,

and all nations will be fummoned before him; the feparation will be made between the godly and the wicked; the books opened, and the dead judged out of them; one party will be adjudged to everlasting life, and the other to everlasting fire, according to their works.

It would be a fight of admirable curiofity, if thou couldst wrap up thyself in some dark cloud, or hide thyfelf in the clift of some high rock, from whence thou mightest espy wicked kings, princes, judges, and great ones of the earth, rifing out of their marble tombs, and brought to the bar, to answer for all their cruelty, injustice, oppression, and profanity, without any marks of distinction, but what their wickedness puts upon them: profane, unholy, and unfaithful church-men, purfued with the curses of their ruined people, from their graves to the judgment-feat, and charged with the blood of fouls, to whom they gave not faithful warning: mighty men standing trembling before the Judge, unable to recover their wonted boldness, to outwit him with their fubtilties, or defend themselves by their strength: delicate women cast forth of their graves, as abominable branches, dragged to the tribunal, to answer for their ungodly lives: the ignorant, fuddenly taught in the law to their cost; and the learned, declared before the world fools and laborious triflers; the Atheist convinced, the hypocrite unmasked; and the profane at length turned ferious about his eternal state: secret murders, adulteries, thefts, cheats, and other works of darkness, which baffled all human fearch, discovered and laid open before the world, with their most minute circumstances: no regard had to the rich, no pity shewn to the poor: the scales of the world turned; oppressed and despised piety set on high; and prosperous wickedness at last brought low; all not found in Christ arraigned, convicted, and condemned, without respect of persons, and driven from the tribunal to the pit; while those found in him at that day, being absolved before the world, go with him into heaven. Nay, but thou canst not so escape. Whoever thou art, not being in Christ, thou must bear a part in this tragical and frightful action.

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Sinner, that fame Lord Christ, whom thou now despisest, whom thou woundest through the sides of his messengers, and before whom thou dost prefer thy lusts, will be thy Judge. The neglected Saviour will be a fevere Judge. O! what mountain, what rock wilt thou get to fall on thee, and hide thee from the face of him who fitteth on the throne? Thou hast now a rock within thee, a heart of adamant, so that thou canst count the darts of the word as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of the spear: but that rock will rend at the sight of the Judge; that hard heart will then break, and thou wilt weep and wail, when weeping and wailing will be to no purpose. Death's bands will fall off, the grave will vomit thee out; the mountains shall skip from thee, and the rocks refuse to grind thee to powder. How will the curfed eyes abide the fight of the Judge! Behold, he cometh! Where is the profane swearer, who tore his wounds? the wretched worldling, now abandoned of his God? the formal hypocrite, who kiffed him, and betraved him? the despiser of the gospel, who fent him away in his meffengers groaning, profaned his ordinances, and trampled under foot his precious blood? O murderer! the flain man is thy Judge: there is he whom thou didft so evil entreat: behold the neglected Lamb of God appearing as a lion against thee! How will thine heart endure the darts of his fiery looks! that rocky heart, which now holds out against him, shall then be blown up: that face, which refuseth to blush now, shall then gather blackness; arrows of wrath shall pierce, where arrows of conviction cannot enter now. What wilt thou answer him when he riseth up, and chargeth thee with thy unbelief and impatience? Wilt thou fay thou wast not warned? Conscience within thee will give thee the lie: the fecret groans and wearinefs of those who warned thee, will witness the contrary. If a child or a fool were to tell you that your house was on fire, you would immediately run to quench it; but, in matters of eternal concern, men will first fill their hearts with prejudices against the messengers, and then cast their message behind their backs. But these filly shifts and pretences will not avail in the day of the Head IV.

Lord. How will these cursed ears, now deaf to the call of the gospel inviting sinners to come to Christ, hear the fearful sentence, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels? No sleepy hearer shall be there: no man's heart will then wander: their hearts and eyes will then be fixed on their misery, which they will not now believe. O that we knew, in this our day, the things that belong to our peace!

Lastly, Be exhorted to believe this great truth; and believe it so as you may prepare for the judgment be-times. Set up a secret tribunal in your own breasts, and often call yourselves to an account there. Make the Judge your friend in time, by closing with him, in the offer of the gospel; give all diligence, that you may be found in Christ at that day. Cast off the works of darkness; and live, as believing you are at all times, and in all places, under the eye of your Judge, who will bring every work into judgment, with every fecret thing. Be fruitful in good works, knowing, that as you low you shall reap. Study piety towards God, righteousness and charity towards men. Lay up in store plenty of works of charity and mercy, towards them who are in distress, especially such as are of the houshold of faith; that they may be produced that day as evidences that you belong to Christ. Shut not up your bowels of mercy now towards the needy; left you then find no mercy. Take heed, that in all your works you be fingle and fincere; aiming, in them all at the glory of your Lord, as a testimony of your love to him, and in obedience to his command. Leave it to hypocrites, who have their rewards, to proclaim every man his own goodness; and to found a trumpet when they do their alms. It is a base and unchristian spirit, which cannot have fatisfaction in a good work, unless it be exposed to the view of others: it is utterly unworthy of one who believes that the last trumpet shall call together the whole world, before whom the Judge himself shall publish works truly good, how secretly soever they were done. Live in a believing expectation of the coming of the Lord. Let your lams be always girt, and your lamps burning: so when he comes,

whether in the last day of your life, or in the last day of the world, you shall be able to say with joy, Lo, this is our God, and we have waited for him.

HEAD V.

The Kingdom of HEAVEN.

Mat. xxv. 34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Aving from this portion of Scripture, which the text is a part of, discoursed on the general judgment; and being to speak of the everlasting happiness of the faints, and the everlasting misery of the wicked, from the respective sentences to be pronounced upon them in the great day, I shall take them in the order, wherein they lie before us; and the rather, as sentence is first passed upon the righteous, so the execution thereof is first begun, though probably the other may

be fully executed before it be compleated.

The words of the text contain the joyful sentence itfelf, together with an historical introduction thereto, which gives us an account of the Judge pronouncing the sentence, the King, Jesus Christ; the parties on whom it is given, them on his right-hand; and the time when, then, as foon as the trial is over. Of these I have spoke already. It is the sentence itself which we are now to confider, Come, ye bleffed of my Father, &c. Stand back, O ye profane goats! away all unregenerate fouls, not being united to Jesus Christ! this is not for you. Come, Oye faints, brought out of your natural state, into the state of grace! behold here the state of glory awaiting you. Here is glory let down to us in words and fyllables; a looking-glass, in which you may see your everlasting happiness; a scheme, (or draught) of Christ's Father's house, wherein there are many mansions.

The glorious fentence bears two things. (1.) The compleat happiness to which the saints are adjudged,

the kingdom. (2.) Their folemn admission to it, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit, &c. First, Their compleat happiness is a kingdom. A kingdom is the top of worldly felicity; there is nothing on earth greater than a kingdom: therefore the hidden weight of glory in heaven is held forth to us under that notion. But it is not an ordinary kingdom, it is the kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, furpassing all the kingdoms of the earth, in glory, honour, profit, and pleasure, infinitely more than they do in these excel the low and inglorious condition of a beggar in rags, and on a dunghill. Secondly, There is a folemn admission of the saints into this their kingdom, Come, ye, inherit the kingdom. In view of angels, men, and devils, they are invested with royalty, and solemnly inaugurated before the whole world, by Jesus Christ, the heir of all things, who hath all power in heaven and in earth. Their right to the kingdom is folemnly recognized and owned. They are admitted to it, as undoubted heirs of the kingdom, to possess it by inheritance or lot, as the word properly fignifies, because, of old, inheritances were designed by lot, as Canaan to Israel, God's first-born, as they are called, Exod. iv. 22... And because this kingdom is the Father's kingdom, therefore they are openly acknowledged, in their ad. mission to it, to be the blessed of Christ's Father; which bleffing was given them long before this fentence, but is now folemnly recognized, and confirmed to them by the Mediator in his Father's name. It is observable, he fays not, ye bleffed of the Father, but, ye bleffed of my Father; to shew us, that all bleffings are derived by us from the Father, the fountain of bleffing, as he is the God and Father of our Lord Jefus Christ, through whom we are bleffed, Eph. i. 3. Finally, they are admitted to this kingdom, as that which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, in God's eternal purpose, before they or any of them were; that all the world may see eternal life to be the free gift of God.

Doct. The faints shall be made compleatly happy,

in the possession of the kingdom of heaven.

Two things I shall here enquire into. (1.) The nature of this kingdom. (2.) The admission of the saints

thereto. And then I shall make some practical improvement of the whole.

FIRST, As to the nature of the kingdom of heaven, our knowledge of it is very imperfect; for, eye hath not feen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, I Cor. ii. 9. As by familiar refemblances parents inftruct their little children, concerning things of which otherwise they can have no tolerable notion; so our gracious God; in consideration of our weakness, is pleased to represent to us heaven's happiness, under similitudes taken from earthly things, glorious in the eyes of men; since naked discoveries of the heavenly glory, divested of earthly resemblances, would be too bright for our weak eyes, and in them we would but lose ourselves. Wherefore, now we can only speak as children of these things, which the day will fully discover.

The state of glory is represented under the idea of a kingdom; a kingdom, among men, being that in which the greatest number of earthly good things doth centre. Now every saint shall, as a king, inherit a kingdom. All Christ's subjects shall be kings, each one with his crown upon his head: not that the great King shall divest himself of his royalty, but he will make all his

children partakers of his kingdom.

I. The faints shall have kingly power and authority given them. Our Lord gives not empty titles to his favourites; he makes them kings indeed. The dominion of the faints will be a dominion far exceeding that of the greatest monarch who ever was upon earth. They will be absolute masters over sin, which had the dominion over them. They will have a compleat rule over their own spirits; an entire management of all their affections and inclinations, which now create them so much molestation: the turbulent root of corrupt affections shall be for ever expelled out of that kingdom, and never be able any more to give them the least disturbance. They shall have power over the nations, the ungodly of all nations, and shall rule them with a rod of iron, Rev. ii. 26, 27. The whole world of the wicked shall be broken before them: Satan shall

be bruifed under their feet, Rom. xvi. 20. He shall never be able to fasten a temptation on them any more: but he will be judged by them: and, in their sight, cast, with the reprobate crew, into the lake of fire and brimstone. So shall they rule over their oppressors. Having fought the good sight, and got the victory. Christ will entertain them as Joshua did his captains, causing them to come near, and put their feet on the necks

of kings, Josh. x. 24.

II. They shall have the ensigns of royalty. For a throne, Christ will grant them to sit down with him on his throne, Rev. iii. 21. They will be advanced to the highest honour and dignity that they are capable of; and in the enjoyment of it they will have an eternal undisturbed repose, after all the tossings which they met with in the world, in their way to the throne. For a crown, they shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. v. 4. Not a crown of flowers, as subjects, being conquerors or victors, have got: such a crown quickly fades; but their crown never fades. Not a crown of gold, fuch as earthly kings wear. Even a crown of gold is often stained, and at the best can never make them happy who wear it. But it shall be a crown of glory. A crown of glory is a crown of life, (Rev. ii. 10.) that life which knows no end: a crown which death can never make to fall off one's head. It must be an abiding crown; for it is a crown of righteousness, 2 Tim. iv. 8. It was purchased for them by Christ's righteousness, which is imputed to them; they are qualified for it by inherent righteoufnels; God's righteousness, or faithfulness, secures it to them, they shall have a sceptre, a rod of iron, Rev. ii. 27. terrible to all the wicked world. And a fword too, a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people, Plal. cxlix. 6, 7. They shall have royal apparel. The royal robes in this kingdom are white robes, Rev. iii. 4. They shall walk with me in white: which, in a very particular manner, point at the inconceivable glory of the state of the saints in heaven.

The Lord is pleased often to represent unto us the glorious state of the saints, by speaking of them as cloathed in white garments. It is promised to the overcomer, that he shall be cloathed in white raiment, Rev. iii. 5. The elders about the throne are cloathed in white raiment, chap. iv. 4. The multitude before the throne are cloathed with white robes, chap. vii. 9. arrayed in white robes, ver. 13. made white in the blood of the Lamb, ver. 14. I own, the two last testimonies respect the state of the saints on earth; yet the terms are borrowed from the state of the church in heaven. All garments, properly so called, being badges of sin and shame, shall be laid aside by the saints, when they come to their state of glory. But if we consider on what occasions white garments were wont to be put on,

we shall find much of heaven under them.

First, The Romans, when they manumitted their bond-fervants, gave them a white garment, as a badge of their freedom. So shall the saints, that day, get on their white robes; for it is the day of the glorious liberty of the children of God, (Rom. viii. 21.) the day of the redemption of their body, ver. 23. They shall no more see the house of bondage, nor lie any more among the pots. If we compare the state of the saints on earth, with that of the wicked, it is not indeed a state of freedom, whereas the other is a state of slavery: but, in comparison with their state in heaven, it is but, a servitude. A faint on earth is indeed a young prince, and heir to the crown; but his motto may be, I ferve; for he differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all, Gal. iv. 1. What are the groans of a faint, the fordid and base work which he is sometimes found employed in, the black and tattered garments which he walks in, but badges of this comparative fervitude? But from the day the faints come to the crown, they receive their compleat freedom, and ferve no more. They shall be fully freed from fin, which of all evils is the worst, both in itself; and in their apprehension too; how great then must that freedom be, when these Egyptians, whom they see to-day, they shall see them again more for ever? They shall be free from all temptation

to fin: Satan can have no access to tempt them any more, by himself, nor by his agents. A full answer will then be given to that petition they have so often repeated, Lead us not into temptation. No hissing serpent can come into the paradife above: no fnare nor trap can be laid there to catch the feet of the faints: they may walk there without fear, for they can be in no hazard: there are no lions dens, no mountains of the leopards, in the promifed land. Nay, they shall be set beyond the possibility of sinning, for they shall be confirmed in goodness. It will be the consummate freedom of their will, to be for ever unalterably determined to good. And they shall be freed from all the effects of sin; there shall be no more death, neither forrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, Rev. xxi. 4. What kingdom is like unto death? Death makes its way now into a palace, as eafily as into a cottage: forrow fills the heart of one who wears a crown on his head: royal robes are no fence against pain, and crying by reason of pain. But in this kingdom no misery can have place. All reproaches shall be wiped off; and never shall a tear drop any more from their eyes. They shall not complain of defertions again; the Lord. will never hide his face from them: but the Sun of Righteousness, shining upon them in his meridian brightness, will dispel all clouds, and give them everlafting day, without the least mixture of darkness. A deluge of wrath, after a fearful thunder-clap from the throne, will sweep away the wicked from before the judgment-feat, into the lake of fire: but the faints are, in the first place, like Noah, brought into the ark, and out of harms way.

Secondly, White raiment hath been a token of purity. Therefore the Lamb's wife is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, Rev. xix. 8. Those who stood before the throne, washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, chap. vii. 14. The saints shall then put on the robes of perfect purity, and shine in spotless holiness, like the sun in his strength, without the least cloud to intercept his light. Absolute innocence shall then be restored, and every appearance of sin

banished far from this kingdom. The guilt of sin, and the reigning power of it, are now taken away in the faints; nevertheless sin dwelleth in them, Rom. vii. 20. but then it shall be no more in them: the corrupt nature will be quite removed: that root of bitterness will be plucked up, and no vestiges of it left in their souls: their nature shall be altogether pure and sinless. There shall be no darkness in their minds; but the underflanding of every faint, when he is come to his kingdom, will be as a globe of pure and unmixed light. There shall not be the least aversion to good, nor the least inclination to evil, in their wills: but they will be brought to a perfect conformity to the will of God; bleffed with angelical purity, and fixed therein. Their affections will not be liable to the least disorder or irregularity: it will cost them no trouble to keep them right: they will get fuch a fixed habit of purity, as they can never lofe. They will be so refined from all earthly drofs, as never to favour more of any thing but heaven. Were it possible for them to be set again amidst the ensnaring objects of an evil world, they would walk among them without the least defilement; as the fun shines on the dung-hill, yet untainted; and as the angels preserved their purity in the midst of Sodom. Their graces shall then be perfected; and all the imperfection now cleaving to them done away. There will be no more ground for complaints of weakness of grace: none in that kingdom shall complain of an ill heart, or a corrupt nature. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear, we shall be like him, 1 John iii. 2.

Thirdly, Among the Jews, those who desired to be admitted into the priestly office, being tried, and sound to be of the priest's line, and without blemish, were cloathed in white, and inrolled among the priests. This seems to be alluded to, Rev.iii. 15. He that overcometh, the same shall be cloathed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life. So the saints shall not be kings only, but priests also; for they are a royal priesthood, 1 Pet. ii. 9. They will be priests upon their thrones. They are judicially found descended

from the great High-priest of their profession, begotten of him by his Spirit, of the incorruptible feed of the word, and without blemish: so the trial being over, they are admitted to be priests in the temple above, that they may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. There is nothing upon earth more glorious than a kingdom; nothing more venerable than the priesthood: and both meet together in the glorified state of the saints. The general assembly of the first born, (Heb. xii. 23.) whose is the priesthood and the double portion, appearing in their white robes of glory, will be a reverend and glorious company. That day will shew them to be the persons whom the Lord hath chosen, out of all the tribes of the earth, to be near unto him, and to enter into his temple, even into his holy place. Their priefthood, begun on earth, shall be brought to its perfection, when they shall be employed in offering the sacrifice of praise to God and the Lamb for ever and ever. They got not their portion in the earth with the rest of the tribes: but the Lord himself was their portion, and will be their double portion, through

the ages of eternity.

Fourthly, They were wont to wear white raiment in a time of triumph; to which also there seems to be an allusion, Rev. iii. 5. He that overcometh, the same shall be eloathed in white raiment. And what is heaven, but an everlasting triumph? None get thither, but such as fight and overcome too. Though Canaan was given to the Israelites as an inheritance, they must conquer it before they could be possessor it. The saints, in this world, are in the field of battle; often in red garments, garments rolled in blood: but the day approacheth, in which they shall stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with white robes, and palms in their hands, Rev. vii. 9.) having obtained a compleat victory over all their enemies. The palm was used as a sign of victory; because that tree, though oppressed with weight, jyet yieldeth not, but rather fhoceeth upwards. And palm-trees were carved on the doors of the most holy place, (1 Kings vi. 32.) which was a special type of heaven; for heaven is the place which the faints are received into, as conquerors.

Behold the joy and peace of the faints, in their white robes! The joys arising from the view of past dangers, and of riches and honours gained at the very door of death, do most sensibly touch one's heart: and this will be an ingredient in the everlasting happiness of the faints, which could have had no place in the heaven of innocent Adam, and his finless offspring, supposing him to have stood. Surely the glorified faints will not forget the entertainment which they met with in the world: it will be to the glory of God to remember it, and will also heighten their joy. The Sicilian king, by birth the fon of a potter, acted a wife part, in that he would be ferved at his table with earthen veffels; which could not but 'put an additional sweetness in his meals, not to be relished by one born heir to the crown. Can ever meat be so sweet to any as to the hungry man? Or can any have fuch a relish of plenty, as he who has been under pinching straits? The more difficulties the faints have passed through, in their way to heaven, the place will be the sweeter to them when they come at it. Every happy stroke, ftruck in the spiritual warfare, will be a jewel in the crown of glory. Each victory obtained against sin, Satan, and the world, will raise their triumphant joy the higher. The remembrance of the cross will sweeten the crown: and the memory of their travel through the wilderness, will put an additional verdure on the fields of glory, while they walk through them, minding the day when they went mourning without

And now they appear triumphing in white robes, it is a fign that they have obtained an honourable peace; fuch a peace as their enemies can diffurb no more. So every thing peculiarly adapted to their militant condition is laid afide. The fword is laid down! and they betake themselves to the pen of a ready writer, to commemorate the praises of him by whom they overcame. Public ordinances, preaching, sacraments, shall be honourably laid aside; there is no temple there, Rev. xx. 22. On earth these were sweet to them: but the travellers being all got home, the inns, appointed for

their entertainment by the way, are shut up; the candles are put out, when the fun is rifen; and the tabernacle used in the wllderness is folded up, when the temple of glory is come in its room. Many of the faints duties will then be laid aside; as one gives his staff out of his hand, when he is come to the end of his journey. Praying shall then be turned to praising: and there being no fin to confess, no wants to feek the supply of, confession and petition shall be swallowed up in everlasting thanksgiving. There will be no mourning in heaven: they have sown in tears. The reaping time of joy is come, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, Rev. xxi. 4. No need of mortification there; and felf-examination is then at an end. They will not need to watch any more; the danger is over. Patience has had its perfect work, and there is no use for it there. Faith is turned into fight, and hope is swallowed up in the ocean of sensible and full enjoyment. All the rebels are subdued, and the faints quietly sit on their thrones; and so the forces, needful in the time of the spiritual warfare, are disbanded; and they carry on their triumph in the profoundest peace.

Lastly, White garments were worn on sestival days, in token of joy. So shall the saints be cloathed in white raiment; for they shall keep an everlasting Sabbath to the Lord; Heb. iv. 9. There remaineth, therefore, a rest (or keeping of a Sabbath) to the people of God. The Sabbath, in the esteem of saints, is the queen of days: and they shall have an endless Sabbatism in the kingdom of heaven: so shall their garments be always white. They will have an eternal rest, with an uninterrupted joy: for heaven is not a resting place, where men may sleep out an eternity; (there they rest not day nor night) but their work is their rest and continual recreation, and toil and weariness have no place there. They rest there in God, who is the centre of their souls. Here they find the completion, or satisfaction of all their desires; having the full enjoyment of God, and uninterrupted communion with him. This is the point unto which, till the soul come, it will

always be restless: but that point reached, it rests; for he is the last end, and the soul can go no farther. It cannot understand, will, nor desire more; but in him it has what is commenfurable to its boundless defires. This is the happy end of all the labours of the faints; their toil and forrows issue in a joyful rest. The Chaldeans measuring the natural day, put the day first, and the night last; but the Jews counted the night first, and the day last. Even so the wicked begin with a day of rest and pleasure, but end with a night of everlafting toil and forrow: but God's people have their gloomy night first, and then comes their day of eternal rest; which Abraham, in the parable, observed to the rich man in hell, Luke xvi. 25. Son, remember, that thou in thy life-time receiveds thy good things, and likewife Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted. and thou art tormented.

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III. If any inquire where the kingdom of the faints lies? It is not in this world; it lies in a better country, that is an heavenly, (Heb. xi. 16.) a country better than the best of this world; namely, the heavenly Canaan, Immanuel's land, where nothing is wanting to complete the happiness of the inhabitants. This is the happy country, bleffed with perpetual fpring, and which yieldeth all things for conveniency and delight. There men shall eat angel's food; they shall be entertained with the bidden manna, (Rev. ii. 17.) without being fet to the painful task of gathering it: they will be fed to the full, with the product of the land falling into their mouths, without the least toil to them. That land enjoys everlasting day, for there is no night there, Rev. xxi. 25. Eternal fun-shine beautisies this better country, but there is no fcorching heat there. No clouds thall be feen there for ever: yet it is not a land of drought; the trees of the Lord's planting are fet by the rivers of water, and shall never want moisture, for they will have an eternal supply of the Spirit, by Jesus Christ, from his Father. This is the only country from whence our Lord came, and whither he is gone again; the country which all the holy patriarchs and prophets had their eye upon while on earth; and

which all the faints, who have gone before us, have fought their way to; and unto which the martyrs have joyfully swimmed through a sea of blood. This earth is the place of the saint's pilgrimage; that is their

country, where they find their everlasting rest.

IV. The royal city is that great city, the holy ferufalem, described at large, Rev. xxi. 10. to the end of the chapter. (It is true some learned divines place this city in the earth: but the particulars of this description feem to me to favour those most who point us to the other world for it.) The faints shall reign in that city, whose wall is of jasper, ver. 16 and the foundations of the wall garnished with all manner of precious stones, ver. 19. and the street of pure gold, ver. 21. So that their feet shall be fet on that which the men of this world fet their hearts upon. This is the city which God has prepared for them, Heb. xi. 16. a city that bath foundations, ver. 10. a continuing city, chap. xiii. 14. which shall stand and slourish, when all the cities of the world are laid in ashes; and which shall not be moved when the foundations of the world are overturned. It is a city that never changeth its inhabitants: none of them shall ever be removed out of it; for life and immortality reign there, and no death can enter into it. It is bleffed with a perfect and perpetual peace, and can never be in the least disturbed. Nothing from without can annoy it; the gates therefore are not shut at all by day, and there is no night there, Rev. xxi. 25. There can nothing from within trouble it. No want of provision there; no scarcity; no discord amongst the saints now; no vestige of their former jarrings shall remain there. Love to God, and to one another, shall be perfected: and those of them who stood at the greatest distance here, will joyfully embrace and delight in one another there.

The royal palace is Christ's Father's house, in which are many mansions, John xiv. 2. There shall the saints dwell for ever. This is the house prepared for all the heirs of glory, even those of them who dwell in the meanest cottage now, or have not where to lay their heads. As the Lord calls his saints to a kingdom, he

will provide them a house suitable to the dignity he puts upon them. Heaven will be a convenient, spacious, and glorious house, for those whom the King delighteth to honour. Never was a house purchased at fo great a rate as this, being the purchase of the Mediator's blood; and no less could it be afforded for to them: never was there fo much to do to fit inhabitants for a house. The faints were, by nature, utterly unfit for this house, and human art and industry could not make them meet for it. But the Father gives the defigned inhabitants to the Son, to be by him redeemed: the Son pays the price of their redemption, even his own precious blood; Justice gives them access to the house: and the Holy Spirit fanctifies them by his grace: that they may be meet to come in thither, where no unclean thing can enter. And no marvel, for it is the King's palace they enter into, (Pfal. xiv. 15.) the house of the kingdom, where the great King keeps his court, where he has fet his throne, and shews forth his glory in a fingular manner, beyond what mortals can conceive.

VI. Paradise is their palace garden. This day shalt thou be with me in paradife, said our Saviour to the penitent thief on the cross, Luke xxiii. 43. Heaven is a paradife for pleasure and delight, where there is both wood and water; A pure river, of water of life, clear as chrystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and on either side of the river, the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month, Rev. xxii. 1, 2. How happy might innocent Adam have been in the earthly paradife, where there was nothing wanting for use or delight! Eden was the most pleasant spot of the uncorrupted earth, and paradife the most pleasant spot of Eden: but what is earth in comparison of heaven? The glorified faints are advanced to the heavenly paradife. There they shall not only see, but eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God, Rev. iii. 7. They thall behold the Mediator's glory, and be fatisfied with his goodness. No flaming sword will be there, to keep the way of that tree of life; but they shall

freely eat of it, and live for ever. They shall drink of the rivers of pleasures, (Psal. xxxvi. 8.) the sweetest and purest pleasures which Immanuel's land affords; and shall swim in the ocean of unmixed delight for evermore.

VII. They shall have royal treasures, sufficient to support the dignity which they are advanced to. Since the street of the royal city is pure gold, and the twelve gates thereof are twelve pearls; their treasure must be of that which is better than gold or pearl. It is an eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. O precious treafure! A treasure not liable to insensible corruption, by moths or rust; a treasure which none can steal from them, Matth. vi. 20. Never did any kingdom afford fuch a precious treasure, nor a treasure of such a variety; for he that overcometh shall inherit all things, Rev. xxi. 7. No treasures on earth are stored with all things: if they were all put together in one, there would be far more valuable things wanting in that one than found in it. This then is the peculiar treasure of the kings, who inherit the kingdom of heaven. They shall want nothing, that may contribute to their full fatisfaction. Now they are rich in hope: but then they will have their riches in hand. Now all things are theirs in respect of right: then all shall be theirs in possession. They may go for ever through Immanuel's land, and behold the glory and riches thereof, with the fatisfying thought, that all which they fee is their own. It is pity they should ever be uneasy, under the want of earthly good things, who may be fure that they thall inherit all things at length.

VIII. Though there is no material temple therein, no ferving of God in the use of ordinances, as here on earth; yet, as for this kingdom, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, Rev. xxi. 22. As the temple was the glory of Canaan, so will the celestial temple be the glory of heaven. The saints shall be brought in thither, as a royal priesthood, to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever; for Jesus Christ will then make every saint a pillar in the temple of God, and he shall go no more cut, (Rev. iii. 12.) as

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the priefts and Levites did, in their courses, go out of the material temple. There the faints shall have the cloud of glory, the divine presence, with most intimate, uninterrupted communion with God: there they shall have Jesus Christ, (as the true ark, wherein the fiery law shall be for ever hid from their eyes;) and the mercy-feat, from which nothing shall be breathed but everlasting peace and good-will towards them: the cherubins, the fociety of holy angels, who shall join with them in eternal admiration of the mystery of Christ: the golden candlestick, with its seven lamps; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, Rev. xxi. 23. The incense-altar, in the intercession of Christ, who ever liveth to make intercession for them, Heb. vii 25. eternally exhibiting the merit of his death and fufferings, and efficaciously willing for ever, that those whom the Father hath given him, be with him: and the shew-bread table, in the perpetual feaft they shall have together in the enjoyment of God. This leads me more particularly to consider,

IX. The fociety in this kingdom. What would royal power and authority, enfigns of royalty, richest treafures, and all other advantages of a kingdom, avail, without comfortable society? Some crowned heads have had but a forry life, through the want of it: their palaces have been unto them as prisons, and their badges of honour as chains on a prisoner; while hated of all, they had none they could trust in, or whom they could have comfortable fellowship with. But the chief part of heaven's happiness lies in the blessed society which the saints shall have there.

First, The society of the saints, among themselves, will be no small part of heaven's happiness. The communion of saints on earth is highly prized by all those who are travelling through the world to Zion: and companions in sin can never have such true pleasure and delight in one another, as sometimes the Lord's people have in praying together, and conversing about those things which the world is a stranger to. Here the saints are but sew in company, at best; and some of

them are so situated, as to seem to themselves to dwell alone; having no access to such as they could freely unbosom themselves to in spiritual matters. They sigh and say, Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits—there is no cluster to eat—the good man is perished out of the earth, Mic. vii. 1, 2. But in the general assembly of the first-born in heaven, none of all the saints who ever were, or will be on the earth, shall be missing. They will be all of them together in one place, all possess one kingdom, and all sit down together to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Here the best of the saints want not their sinful impersections, making their society less comfortable: but there they shall be perfect, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Eph. v. 27. All natural, as well as sinful impersections, will be done away; they shall shine as the brightness of the

firmament, Dan xii. 3.

There we shall see Adam and Eve in heavenly paradise, freely eating of the tree of life; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the holy patriarchs, no more wandering from land to land, but come to their everlasting rest; all the prophets, feeding their eyes on the glory of him of whose coming they prophesied; the twelve apostles of the Lamb, sitting on their twelve thrones; all the holy martyrs in their long white robes, with their crowns on their heads; the godly kings advanced to a kingdom, which cannot be moved; and them that turn many to righteousness, shining as the stars for ever and ever. There we shall see our godly friends, relations, and acquaintances, pillars in the temple of God, to go no more out from us. And it is more than probable, that the faints will know one another in heaven; at least, they will know their friends, relatives, and those they were acquainted with on earth, and fuch as have been most eminent in the church: yet that knowledge will be purged from all earthly thoughts and affections. This feems to be included in that perfection of happiness to which the saints shall be advanced. If Adam knew who and what Eve was, at first fight, when the Lord God brought her to him, (Gen ii. 23, 24.) why should one question but hus-

bands and wives, parents and children, will know each other in glory? If the Theffalonians, converted by Paul's ministry, shall be his crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord fesus Christ at his coming, (1 Thess. ii. 19.) why may we not conclude, that ministers shall know their people, and people their ministers, in heaven? and if the disciples, on the mount of transfiguration, knew Moses and Elias, whom they had never feen before, (Mat. xviii. 4.) we have reason to think that we shall know them too, and such as they, when we come to heaven. The communion of faints shall be most intimate there; they shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, Mat. viii. 11. Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bofom, (Luke xvi. 23.) which denotes most intimate and familiar fociety. And though diverfity of tongues shall cease, (1 Cor. xiii. 8.) I make no question, but there will be the use of speech in heaven; and that the saints will glorify God in their bodies there, as well as in their spirits, speaking forth his praises with an audible voice. (As for the language, we shall understand what it is when we come thither.) When Paul was caught up to the third heaven, the feat of the bleffed, he heard there unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, 2 Cor. xii. 4. Moses and Elias, on the mount with Christ, talked with him, Mat. xvii. 3. and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at ferusalem, Luke ix. 31.

Secondly, The faints will have the fociety of all the holy angels there. An innumerable company of angels shall be companions to them in their glorified state. Happy were the shepherds, who heard the song of the heavenly host when Christ was born: but thrice happy they, who shall join their voices with theirs, in the quire of saints and angels in heaven; when he shall be glorified in all who shall be about him there. Then shall we be brought acquainted with those blessed spirits, who never sinned. How bright will those morning-stars shine in the holy place! they were ministring spirits to the heirs of salvation, loved them for their Lord and master's sake; encamped round about them,

to preserve them from danger: how joyful will they welcome them to their everlasting habitations; and rejoice to see them come at length to their kingdom, as the tutor doth in the prosperity of his pupils! The faints shall be no more afraid of them, as sometimes they were wont to be: they shall then have put off mortality, and infirmities of the flesh, and be themselves as the angels of God, fit to entertain communion and fellowship with them. And both being brought under one Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, they will join in the praises of God and of the Lamb, faying, with a bud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was flain, &c. Rev. v. 11, 12. Whether the angels shall (as some think) affume ethereal bodies, that they may be feen by the bodily eyes of the faints, and be in a nearer capacity to converse with them, I know not: but as they want not ways of converse among themselves, we have reason to think, that conversation between them and the saints

shall not be for ever blocked up.

Lastly, They shall have society with the Lord himself in heaven, glorious communion with God in Christ, which is the perfection of happiness. I choose to speak of communion with God and the man Christ together; because, as we derive our grace from the Lamb, so we thall derive our glory from him too, the man Christ being (if I may be allowed the expression) the centre of the divine glory in heaven, from whence it is diffused unto all the faints. This feems to be taught us by the Scriptures, which express heaven's happiness by being with Christ, Luke xxiii. 43. This day shalt thou be with me in paradise. John xvii. 24. Father, I will that those also whom thou hast given me, be with me. (And remarkable to this purpose is what follows, that they may behold my glory) I Theff. iv. 17. So shall we over be with the Lord, to wit, the Lord Christ, whom we shall meet in the air. This also seems to be the import of the Scriptures, wherein God and the Lamb, the flain Saviour, are jointly spoken of, in point of the happiness of the faints in heaven, Rev. vii. 17. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Chap. xxi. 3. Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, to wit, as in a tabernacle, (so the word fignifies) that is, in the flesh of Christ, (comp. John i. 14.) and ver. 22. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. Here lies the chief happiness of the saints in heaven, without which they could never be happy, though lodged in that glorious place, and blessed with the society of angels there. What I shall venture to say of it, shall be comprized

in three things.

First, The faints in heaven shall have the glorious presence of God and of the Lamb: God himself shall be with them, Rev. xxi. 3. And they shall ever be with the Lord. God is every where present, in respect of his effence; the faints militant have his special gracious presence: but in heaven they have his glorious presence. There they are brought near to the throne of the great King, and stand before him, where he shews his inconceivable glory. There they have the tabernacle of God, on which the cloud of glory rests, the all-glorious human nature of Christ, wherein the fulness of the God-head dwells; not vailed as in the days of his humiliation, but shining through that bleffed flesh (that all the faints may behold his glory), and making that body more glorious than a thousand funs: fo that the city has no need of the fun, nor of the moon, but the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof (properly, the candle thereof), Rev. xxi. 23. i. e. The Lamb is the luminary or luminous body, which gives light to the city; as the fun and moon now give light to the world, or as a candle lightens a dark room: and the light proceeding from that glorious luminary of the city, is the glory of God. Sometimes on earth that candle burnt very dim, it was hid under a bushel, in the time of his humiliation; only now and then it darted out some rays of this light, which dazzled the eyes of the spectators: but now it is fet on high, in the city of God, where it shines, and shall shine for ever, in persection of glory. It was here laid afide, as a stone disallowed

of the builders: but now it is, and for ever will be the light, or luminary of that city; and that like unto a flone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as chrys-

tal, ver. 11.

Who can conceive the happiness of the saints, in the presence chamber of the great King, where he sits in his chair of state, making his glory eminently to appear in the man Christ? His glorious presence makes a mighty change upon the faints in this world: his glorious presence in heaven, then, must needs raise their graces to perfection, and elevate their capacities. The faints experience that the presence of God, now with them, in his grace, can make a little heaven of a fort of hell. How great must the glory of heaven then be, by his presence there in his glory! If a candle, in fome fort, beautifies a cottage or prison, how will the shining fun beautify a palace or paradife! the gracious presence of God made a wilderness lightsome to Moses, the valley of the shadow of death to David, a fiery furnace to the three children: what ravishing beauty shall then arise from the Sun of Righteousness, shining in his meridian brightness on the street of the city laid with pure gold! This glorious presence of God in heaven, will put a glory on the saints themselves. The pleasant garden hath no beauty, when the darkness of the night fits down on it; but the shining fun puts a glory on the blackest mountains: so those who are now as bottles in the smoke, when set in the glorious presence of God, will be glorious both in foul and body.

adly, The faints in heaven shall have the full enjoyment of God and the Lamb. This is it that perfectly satisfies the rational creature; and here is the saints everlasting rest. This will make up all their wants and fill the desires of their souls, which, after all here obtained, still cry, Give, give, not without some anxiety; because though they do enjoy God, yet they do not enjoy him fully. As to the way and manner of his enjoyment, our Lord tells us, John xvii. 3. This is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Now there are two

ways, how a defireable object is known most perfectly and fatisfyingly; the one is by fight, the other by experience: fight fatisfies the understanding, and experience fatisfies the will. Accordingly, one may jay that the faints enjoy God and the Lamb in heaven, (1.) By an intuitive knowledge. (2.) By an experimental knowledge, both of them perfect, I mean, in respect of the capacity of the creature; for otherwise a creature's perfect knowledge of the infinite Being is impossible. The saints below enjoy God in that knowledge which they have of him by report, from his holy word, which they believe; they fee him likewife darkly in the glass of ordinances, which do, as it were, represent the Bridegroom's picture or shadow, while he is absent: they have also some experimental knowledge of him, they tafte that God is good, and that the Lord is gracious. But the faints above will not need a good report of the King; they shall see himself; therefore faith ceaseth; they will behold his own face; therefore ordinances are no more, there is no need of a glass. They shall drink, and drink abundantly of that whereof they have tasted; and so hope ceaseth, for they are at the utmost bounds of their desires.

I. The faints in heaven will enjoy God and the Lamb by fight, and that in a most perfect manner, I Cor. xiii. 12. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Here our fight is but mediate, as by a glass, in which we fee not things themselves, but the images of things: but there we shall have an immediate view of God and the Lamb. Here our knowledge is but. obscure; there it shall be clear, without the least mixture of darkness. The Lord now converses with his faints, through the latteffes of ordinances; but then they will be in his presence-chamber with him. There is a vail now on the glorious face, as to us: but when we come to the upper-house, that vail, through which fome rays of beauty are now darted, will be found entirely taken off; and then shall glorious excellencies and perfections, not feen in him by mortals, be clearly discovered, for we shall see his face, Rev. xxii. 4. The phrase seems to be borrowed from the honour put

upon some in the courts of monarchs, to be attendants on the king's person. We read, Jer. liii. 25. of seven men of them that were (Heb. seers of the king's face, i. e. as we read it) near the king's person. O unspeakable glory! the great King keeps his court in heaven: and the saints shall all be his courtiers, ever near the King's person, seeing his face. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him. And

they shall see his face.

1. They shall see Jesus Christ, God and man, with their bodily eyes, fince he will never lay aside the human nature. They will always behold that glorious bleffed body, which is personally united to the divine nature, and exalted far above principalities and powers, and every name that is named. There we shall see, with our eyes, that very body which was born of Mary at Bethlehem, and crucified at Jerusalem between two thieves! the bleffed head that was crowned with thorns; the face that was spit upon; the hands and feet that were nailed to the cross; all shining with inconceivable glory. The glory of the man Christ will attract the eyes of all the faints, and he will be for ever admired in all them that believe, 2 Thess. i. 10. Were each star in the heavens shining as the sun in its meridian brightness, and the light of the sun so encreafed, for the stars to bear the same proportion to the fun, in point of light that they do now, it might possibly be some faint resemblance of the glory of the man Christ, in comparison with that of the saints: for though the faints shall shine forth as the sun; yet not they, but the Lamb shall be the light of the city. The wife men fell down and worshipped him, when they faw him a young child with Mary his m ther, in the house, But O what a ravishing fight will it be to see him in his kingdom, on his throne, at the Father's righthand! The word was made flesh, (John i. 14.) and the glory of God shall shine through that flesh, and joys of heaven spring out from it, unto the faints, who shall see and enjoy God in Christ. For since the union between Christ and the faints is never dissolved, but they continue his members for ever, and the members

cannot draw their life, but from their head, feeing that which is independent on the head, as to vital influence, is no member: therefore Jesus Christ will remain the everlasting bond of union between God and the faints; from whence their eternal life shall spring, John xvii. 2, 3. 22, 23. Thou hast given him power over all stess, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, &c. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. Wherefore, the immediate enjoyment of God in heaven, is to be understood in respect of the laying aside of the word and sacraments, and fuch external means as we enjoy God by in this world; but not as if the faints should then cast off their dependance on their Head for vital influences: nay, the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters, Rev. viii. 17.

Now when we shall behold him, who died for us, that we might live for evermore, whose matchless love made him swim through the red-sea of God's wrath, to make a path in the midst of it for us, by which we might pass safely to Canaan's land; then we shall see what a glorious one he was, who fuffered all this for us; what entertainment he had in the upper-house; what hallelujahs of angels could not hinder him to hear the groans of a perishing multitude on earth, and to come down for their help; and what glory he laid aside for us. Then shall we be more able to comprehend with all faints what is the breadth, length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 18, 19. When the faints shall remember that the waters of wrath, which he was plunged into, are the wells of falvation, from whence they draw all their joy; that they have got the cup of falvation, in exchange for the cup of wrath which his Father gave him to drink, which his human nature shivered at: how will their hearts leap within them, burn with feraphic love, and like coals of juniper, and the arch of heaven

ring with their fongs of falvation! The Jews celebrating the feast of tabernacles (which was the most joyful of all their feasts, and lasted seven days), went once every day about the altar, finging hofanna, with their myrtle, palm, and willow branches in their hand (the two former figns of victory, the last of chastity), in the mean time bending their boughs towards the altar. When the faints are presented as a chaste virgin to Christ, and as conquerors have got their palms in their hands, how joyfully will they compass the altar evermore, and sing their hosannas, or rather their hallelujahs about it, bending their palms towards it; acknowledging themfelves to owe all unto the Lamb that was flain, and redeemed them with his blood! To this agrees what John faw, Rev. vii. 9, 10. A great multitude stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with white robes. and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, faying, Salvation to our God, which fitteth upon the throne. and unto the Lamb.

2. They shall see God, Matth. v. 8. They will be happy in seeing the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (not with their bodily eyes, in respect of which God is invifible, 1 Tim. i. 17.) but with the eyes of their understanding; being blessed with the most perfect, full, and clear knowledge of God, and divine things, which the creature is capable of. This is called the beatific vision; and is the perfection of understanding, the utmost term thereof. It is but an obscure delineation of the glory of God that mortals can have on earth; a fight, as it were, of his back parts, Exod. xxxiii. 23. but there they will see his face, Rev. xxii. 4. They shall see him in the fulness of his glory, and behold him fixedly; whereas it is but a passing view which they can have of him here, Exod. xxxiv. 6. There is a vast difference between the fight of a king in his night-clothes, quickly passing by us, and a fixed leisure view of him, sitting on his throne in his royal robes, his crown on his head, and his sceptre in his hand: such a difference will there be between the greatest manifestation of God that ever a faint had on earth, and the display of his glory in heaven. There the faints shall eternally, without interruption, feed their eyes upon him, and be ever viewing his glorious perfections. And as their bodily eyes shall be strengthened and fitted to behold the glorious majesty of the man Christ, as eagles gaze on the sun, without being blinded thereby: so their minds shall have such an elevation, as will fit them to see God in his glory: their capacities shall be enlarged, according to the measure in which he shall be pleased to communicate himself unto them, for their complete happiness.

This blifsful fight of God, being quite above our present capacities, we must needs be much in the dark about it. But it seems to be something else than the fight of that glory, which we shall see with our bodily eyes in the faints, and in the man Christ, or any other splendour or refulgence from the Godhead whatever; for no created thing can be our chief good and happiness, nor fully satisfy our souls; and it is plain that these things are somewhat different from God himself. Therefore I conceive that the fouls of the faints shall fee God himself: so the Scriptures teach us, that we shall see face to face, and know even as we are known, I Cor. xiii. 12. and that we shall see him as he is, I John iii. 2. yet the faints can never have an adequate conception of God: they cannot comprehend that which is infinite. They may touch the mountain, but cannot grafp it in their arms. They cannot with one glance of their eye behold what grows on every fide: but the divine perfections will be an unbounded field, in which the glorified shall walk eternally, seeing more and more of God, fince they can never come to an end of that which is infinite. They may bring their veffels to this ocean every moment, and fill them with new waters. What a ravishing fight would it be, to see all the perfections and lovely qualities, that are fcattered here and there among the creatures, gathered together into one! But even fuch a fight would be infinitely belowthis blissful fight which the saints shall have in heaven. For they shall see God, in whom all these perfections shall eminently appear infinitely more, whereof there is no vestige to be found in the creatures. In him shall they fee every thing defireable, and nothing but what is desireable.

Then shall they be perfectly satisfied as to the love of God towards them, which they are now ready to queltion on every turn. They will be no more put to it to perfuade themselves of it, by marks, signs, and teftimonies: they will have an intuitive knowledge of it. They shall (with the profoundest reverence be it spoken) look into the heart of God, and there see the love which he bore to them from all eternity, and the love and goodness which he will bear to them for evermore. The glorified shall have a most clear and distinct understanding of divine truths, for in his light we shall Tee light, Pfal. xxxvi. 9. The light of glory will be a compleat commentary on the Bible, and untie all the hard and knotty questions in divinity. There is no joy on earth comparable to that which arifeth from the difcovery of truth; no discovery of truth comparable to the discovery of Scripture truth, made by the Spirit of the Lord unto the foul. I rejoice at thy word, fays the Pfalmist, as one that findeth great spoil, Pfal. cxix. 162. Yet it is but an imperfect discovery which we have of it while here: How ravishing then will it be, to see the opening of the whole treasure hid in that field! They shall also be led into the understanding of the works of God. The beauty of the works of creation and providence will then be fet in due light, Natural knowledge will be brought to perfection by the light of glory. The web of Providence concerning the church, and all men whatever, will then be cut out, and laid before the eyes of the faints: and it will appear a most beautiful mixture, so as they shall all say together, on the view of it, He bath done all things well. But in a special manner, the work of redemption shall be the eternal wonder of the faints, and they will admire and praise the glorious contrivance for ever. Then shall they get a full view of its suitableness to the Divine perfections, and to the case of sinners; and clearly read the covenant that past between the Father and the Son, from all eternity, touching their salvation. They shall for ever wonder and praise, and praise and wonder at the mysteries of wisdom and love, goodness and holiness, mercy and justice, appearing in the glorious scheme. Their souls will be

State IV.

eternally fatisfied with the fight of God himself, of their election by the Father, their redemption by the Son, and application thereof to them by the Holy Spirit.

II. The faints in heaven shall enjoy God in Christ by experimental knowledge, which is, when the object itself is given and possessed. This is the participation of the divine goodness in full measure; which is the perfection of the will, and utmost term thereof. The Lamb shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, Rev. vii. 17. These are no other but God himself, the fountain of living waters, who will fully and freely communicate himself unto them. He will pour out of his goodness eternally into their souls: then shall they have a most lively sensation, in the innermost part of their fouls, of all that goodness which they heard of, and believed to be in him, and of what they see in him by the light of glory. This will be an everlasting practical exposition of that word, which men and angels cannot sufficiently unfold, to wit, God himself shall be their God, Rev. xxi. 3. God will communicate himself unto them fully: they will no more be fet to taste of the streams of divine goodness in ordinances, as they were wont, but shall drink at the fountain-head. They will no more be entertained with fips and drops, but filled with all the fulness of God. And this will be the entertainment of every faint: for though in created things, what is given to one is withheld from another, yet the infinite Good can fully communicate itself to all, and fill all. Those who are heirs of God, the great heritage, shall then enter into a full possession of their inheritance: and the Lord will open his treasures of goodness unto them, that their enjoyment may be full. They shall not be stinted to any measure: but the enjoyment shall go as far as their enlarged capacities can reach. As a narrow veffel cannot contain the ocean, so neither can the finite creature comprehend the infinite Good. But no measure shall be set to the enjoyment, but what ariseth from the capacity of the creature. So that, although there be degrees of glory, yet all shall be filled, and have what they can hold; though fome will be capable

to hold more than others. There will be no want to any of them; all shall be fully satisfied, and perfectly bleffed in the full enjoyment of divine goodness, according to their enlarged capacities. As when bottles of different fizes are filled, some contain more, others less; yet all of them have what they can contain. The glorified shall have all in God for the satisfaction of all their defires. No created thing can afford fatisfaction to all our defires; cloaths may warm us, but they cannot feed us; the light is comfortable, but cannot nourish us. But in God we shall have all our defires, and we shall defire nothing without him. They shall be the happy ones, that defire nothing but what is truly defireable; they shall have all they defire, God will be all in all to the faints: he will be their life, health, riches, honour, peace, and all good things. He will communicate himself freely to them: the door of access to him shall never be shut again for one moment. They may, when they will, take of the fruits of the tree of life, for they will find it on each fide the river, Rev. xxii. 2. There will be no vail between God and them, to be drawn aside; but his fulness shall ever stand open to them. No door to knock at in heaven; no asking to go before receiving: the Lord will allow his people an unrestrained familiarity with himself there.

Now, they are in part made partakers of the divine nature; but then they shall perfectly partake of it; that is to say, God will communicate to them his own image, make all his goodness not only pass before them, but pass unto them, and stamp the image of all his own perfections upon them, so far as the creature is capable to receive the same; from whence shall result a perfect likeness to him, in all things in or about them; which compleats the happiness of the creature. This is what the Psalmist seems to have had in view, Psal. xvii. 15. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness; the perfection of God's image following upon the beatistic vision. And so says John, 1 John iii. 2. We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. Hence there shall be a most close and intimate union between

God and the faints: God shall be in them, and they in God, in the way of a glorious and most perfect union; for then they shall dwell in love made perfect. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him, 1 John iv. 16. How will the faints knit with God, and he with them, when he shall fee nothing in them but his own image; when their love shall arrive at its perfection, no nature but the divine nature being left in them; and all imperfection swallowed up in their glorious transformation into the likeness of God! Their love to the Lord, being purged from the drofs of felf-love, shall be most pure: so as they will love nothing but God, and in God. It shall be no more faint and languishing, but burn like coals of juniper. It will be a light without darkness, a flaming fire without smoke. As the live coal, when all the moisture is gone out of it, is all fire; so will the faints be all love, when they come to the full enjoyment of God in heaven, by intuitive and experimental knowledge of him, by fight and full participation of the divine goodness.

Lastly, From this glorious presence and enjoyment shall arise an unspeakable joy, which the faints shall be filled with. In thy presence is fulness of joy, Psal. xvi. 11. The saints sometimes enjoy God in the world, but when their eyes are held, fo as not to perceive it, they have not the comfort of the enjoyment: but then all miltakes being removed, they shall not only enjoy God, but rest in the enjoyment with inexpressible joy and satisfaction. The defire of earthly things breeds torment, and the enjoyment of them often ends in loathing. But though the glorified faints shall ever defire more and more of God, their defires shall not be mixed with the least anxiety, fince the fulness of the Godhead stands always open to them; therefore they shall hunger no more, they shall not have the least uneafiness in their eternal appetite after the hidden manna; neither shall continued enjoyment breed loathing; they shall never think that they have too much; therefore it is added, Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, Rev. vii. 16. The

enjoyment of God and the Lamb will be ever fresh

and new to them, through the ages of eternity; for they shall drink of living fountains of waters, where new waters are continually springing up in abundance, ver. 17. They shall eat of the tree of life, which, for variety, affords twelve manner of fruits, and these always new and fresh, for it yields every month, Rev xxii. 2. Their joy shall be pure and unmixed, without any dregs of forrow; not flight and momentary, but folid and everlasting, without interruption. They will enter into joy, Matt. xxv. 21. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. The expression is somewhat unusual, and brings into my mind this word of our fuffering Redeemer, Mark xvi. 34. My foul is exceeding forrowful unto death. His foul was befet with forrows, as the word there used will bear; the floods of forrow went round about him, encompassing him on every hand; wherever he turned his eyes, forrow was before him; it sprang in upon him from heaven, earth, and hell, at once: thus he entered into forrow, and therefore faith, Pfal. lxix. 2. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. Now wherefore all this, but that his own might enter into joy? Joy sometimes enters into us now, but has much to do to get access, while we are encompassed about with forrows: but then joy shall not only enter into us, but we shall enter into it, and swim for ever in the ocean of joy; where we shall fee nothing but joy wherever we turn our eyes. The presence and enjoyment of God and the Lamb will fatisfy us with pleasures for evermore: and the glory of our souls and bodies, arising from thence, will afford us everlasting delight. The spirit of heaviness, how closely soever it cleaves to any of the faints now, shall drop off then: their weeping shall be turned into songs of joy, and bottles of tears shall issue in rivers of pleasures. Happy they who now fow in tears, which shall spring up in joy in heaven, which will encircle their heads with a weight of glory.

Thus far of the society in this kingdom of the saints X. In the last place. The kingdom shall endure for ever. As every thing in it is eternal, so the saints shall have undoubted certainty and full assurance of the

eternal duration of the fame. This is a necessary ingredient in perfect happiness: for the least uncertainty, as to the continuance of any good with one, is not without some fear, anxiety, and torment; and therefore is utterly inconfistent with perfect happiness. But the glorified shall never have fear, or cause of fear, of any loss; they shall be ever with the Lord, I Thess. iv. 17. They shall all attain to the full persuasion, that nothing shall be able to separate them from the love of God; nor from the full enjoyment of him for ever. The inheritance referved in heaven is incorruptible; it hath no principle of corruption in itself, to make it liable to decay, but endures for evermore: it is undefiled; nothing from without can mar its beauty, nor is there any thing in itself to offend those who enjoy it. Therefore it fadeth not away: but ever remains in its native lustre, and primitive beauty, 1 Pet. i, 4. Hitherto of the nature of the kingdom of heaven.

SECONDLY, We now proceed to speak of the admission of the saints into this their kingdom. I shall briefly touch on two things. (1.) The formal admission, in the call unto them from the Judge, to come to their kingdom. (2.) The quality in which they are admitted

and introduced to it.

I. Their admission, the text shews to be by a voice from the throne; the King calling to them from the throne, before angels and men, to come to their kingdom. Come and go are but short words; but they will be fuch as will afford matter of thought to all mankind, through the ages of eternity; fince everlasting happiness turns upon one, and upon the other everlasting misery. Now our Lord bids the worst of sinners, who hear the gospel, Come; but the most part will not come unto him. Some few, whose hearts are touched by his Spirit, who embrace the call, and their fouls within them fay, Behold we come unto thee, they give themselves to the Lord, forsake the world and their lusts for him; they bear his yoke, and cast it not off, no not in the heat of the day, when the weight of it, perhaps, makes them sweat the blood out of their bodies. Behold the fools! faith the carnal world, whither are they going? But stay a little, O foolish world; from the same mouth, whence they had the call which they are now following, another call shall come, which will make amends for all. Come, ye blessed

of my Father, inherit the kingdom.

The faints shall find an inexpressible sweetness in this call, Come. (1.) Hereby Jesus Christ shews his defire of their fociety in the upper-house, that they may be ever with him there. Thus he will open his heart unto them, as fometimes he did to his Father concerning them, faying, Father, I will, that they-be with me, where I am, John xvii. 24. Now the travail of his foul stands before the throne, not only the souls, but the bodies which he has redeemed; and they must come, for he must be compleatly satisfied, (2.) Hereby they are folemnly invited to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. They were invited to the lower table, by the voice of the fervants, and the fecret workings of the Spirit within them; and they came and did partake of the feast ofdivine communications in the lower-house; but Jesus Christ in person shall invite them, before all the world, to the highest table. (3.) By this he admits them into the mansions of glory. The key of heaven hangs at the girdle of our royal Mediator; All power in heaven is given to him, (Mat. xxviii, 18.) and none get in thither but whom he admits, When they were living on earth with the rest of the world, he opened the everlasting doors of their hearts, entered into them, and shut them again; so as sin could never re-enter, to reign there as formerly: now he opens heaven's doors to them, draws his doves into the ark, and thuts them in; fo as the law, death, and hell, can never get them out again, The faints in this life were still labouring to enter into that rest; but Satan was always pulling them back, their corruption always drawing them down; infomuch that they have fometimes been left to hang by a hair of promife, (if I may be allowed the expression) not without fears of falling into the lake of fire: but now Christ gives the word for their admission; they are brought in, and put beyond all hazard. Laftly, He speaks to them as the person introducing them into the kingdom, into

the presence-chamber of the great King, and unto the throne. Jesus Christ is the great Secretary of heaven, whose office it is to bring the faints into the gracious presence of God now; and to whom alone it belongs to bring them into the glorious presence of God in heaven. Truly heaven would be a strange place to them, if Jesus was not there: but the Son will introduce his brethren into his Father's kingdom; they shall go in with him to the marriage, Matt. xxv. 10.

II. Let us consider in what quality they are intro-

duced by him.

First, He brings them in as the bleffed of his Father; so runs the call from the throne, Come, ve blessed of my Father, &c. It is Christ's Father's house which they are to come into: therefore he puts them in mind that they are bleffed of his Father; dear to the Father, as well as to himself. This is it that makes heaven bome to them; namely, that it is Christ's Father's house, where they may be affured of welcome, being married to the Son, and being his Father's choice for that very end. He brings them in for his Father's fake, as well as for his own: they are the bleffed of his Father; who, is the fountain of Deity, and of all bleffings conferred on the children of men. They are those whom God loved from eternity. They were bleffed in the eternal purpose of God, being elected to everlasting life; at the opening of the book of life, their names were found written therein. So that by bringing them to the kingdom, he doth but bring them to what the Father, from all eternity, defigned for them. Being faved by the Son, they are faved according to his (i. e. the Father's) purpose, 2 Tim. i. 9. They are those to whom the Father has spoken well. He spoke well to them in his word, which must now receive its full accomplishment. They had his promise of the kingdom, lived and died in the faith of it; and now they come to receive the thing promifed. Unto them he has done well. A gift is often in Scripture called a bleffing; and God's bleffing is ever real; like Isaac's bleffing; by which Jacob became his heir • they were all by grace justified, sanctified, and enabled to persevere to the end; now they are raised up in glory, and being tried, stand in the judgment: what remains, then, but that God crown his own work of grace in them, in giving them their kingdom, in the full enjoyment of himself for ever? Finally, They are those whom God has consecrated; which also is a Scripture term of blessing, 1 Cor. x. 16. God set them apart for himself, to be kings and priests unto him; and the Mediator introduceth them, as such, to their

kingdom and priesthood.

Secondly, Christ introduceth them as heirs of the kingdom, to the actual possession of it. Come, ve blessed, inherit the kingdom. They are the children of God by regeneration and adoption; and if children, then beirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17. Now is the general affembly of the first-born before the throne: their minority is overpast, and the time appointed of the Father for their receiving of their inheritance is come. The Mediator purchased the inheritance for them with his own blood; their rights and evidences were drawn long ago, and registered in the Bible; nay, they have investment of their inheritance in the perfon of Jesus Christ, as their Proxy, when he ascended into heaven, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, Heb. vi. 20. Nothing remaineth, but that they enter into perfonal possession thereof, which, begun at death, is perfected at the last day, when the faints in their bodies, as well as their fouls, go into their kingdom.

Laftly, They are introduced to it, as those it was prepared for from the foundation of the world. The kingdom was prepared for them in the eternal purpose of God, before they or any of them had a being, which shews it to be a gift of free-grace to them. It was, from eternity, the divine purpose, that there should be such a kingdom for the elect; and that all impediments, which might mar their access to it, should be removed out of the way; and also by the same eternal decree, every one's place in it was determined and set apart, to be reserved for him; that each of the children coming home at length into their Father's house, might find his own place awaiting him, and ready for him; as at Saul's table, David's place was empty, when he was

not there to occupy it himself, 1 Sam. xx. 25. And now the appointed time is come, they are brought in

to take their feveral places in glory.

Use. I shall shut up my discourse, on this subject, with a word of application. (1.) To all who claim a right to this kingdom. (2.) To those who have indeed a right to it. (3.) To those who have no right thereto.

First, Since it is evident, there is no promiscuous admission into the kingdom of heaven, and none obtain it but those whose claim to it is solemnly tried by the great Judge, and after trial supported as good and valid; it is necessary that all of us impartially try and examine, whether, according to the laws of the kingdom, contained in the holy Scriptures, we can verify and make good our claim to this kingdom? The hopes of heaven, which most men have, are built on such fandy foundations, as can never abide the trial; having no ground in the word, but in their own deluded fancy: fuch hopes will leave those who entertain them miserably disappointed at last. Wherefore it is not only our duty, but our interest, to put the matter to a fair trial in time. If we find we have no right to heaven, we are yet in the way; and what we have not, we may obtain: but if we find that we have a right to it, we shall then have the comfort of a happy prospect into eternity; which is the greatest comfort one is capable of in the world. If you enquire, How you may know whether you have a right to heaven or not? I answer, You may know that by the state you are now in. If you are yet in your natural state, you are children of wrath, and not children of this kingdom: for that state, to them who live and die in it, issues in eternal misery: If you be brought into the state of grace, you have a just claim to the state of glory; for grace will certainly iffue in glory at length. This kingdom is an inheritance, which none but the children of God can justly claim: now we become the children of God by regeneration, and union with Christ his Son; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17. These, then, are the great points upon which one's evidences for the state of glory depend. Therefore I refer you to what is faid on the state of grace, for satisf-

fying you as to your right to glory.

If you be heirs of glory, the kingdom of God is within you, by virtue of your regeneration and union with Christ. (1.) The King of heaven has the throne in thy heart, if thou hast a right to that kingdom: Christ is in thee, and God is in thee; and having chosen him for thy portion, thy foul has taken up its everlasting rest in him, and gets no true rest but in him; as the dove, until she came unto the ark. To him the soul habitually inclines, by virtue of the new nature, the Divine nature, which the heirs of glory are partakers of, Pfal. lxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee. (2.) The laws of heaven are in thy heart, if thou art an heir of heaven, Heb. viii. 10. I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. mind is enlightened in the knowledge of the laws of the kingdom, by the Spirit of the Lord, the instructor of all the heirs of glory; for whoever may want instruction, sure an heir to a crown shall not want it. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God, John.vi. 45. Therefore, though father and mother leave them early, or be in no concern about their Christian education, and they be soon put to work for their daily bread, yet they shall not lack teaching. Withal, thy heart is changed, and thou bearest God's image, which consists in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. Thy foul is reconciled to the whole law of God, and at war with all known fin. In vain do they pretend to the holy kingdom, who are not holy in heart and life; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 24. If heaven is a rest, it is for spiritual labourers, not for loiterers. If it is an eternal triumph, they are not in the way to it, who avoid the spiritual warfare, and are in no care to subdue corruption, refift temptation, and to cut their way through it, through the opposition made by the devil, the world, and the flesh. (3.) The treasure in heaven is the chief in thy esteem and defire; for it is your treasure, and where your treasure is, there will your heart be also, Mat.

State IV. vi. 21. If it is not the things that are seen, which thy heart is in greatest care and concern to obtain; if thou art driving a trade with heaven, and thy chief bufiness lies there; it is a fign that thy treasure is there, for thy heart is there. But if thou art of those who wonder why fo much ado about heaven and eternal life, as if less might serve the turn; thou art like to have nothing ado with it at all. Carnal men value themselves most on their treasures upon earth; with them the things that are not feen are weighed down by the things that are feen, and no losses so much affect them as earthly losses: but the heirs of the crown of glory value themselves most on their treasures in heaven, and will not put their private estate in the ba-lance with their kingdom; nor will the loss of the former go so near their hearts, as the thoughts of the loss of the latter. Where these first-fruits of heaven are to be found, the eternal weight of glory will furely follow after; while the want of them must be admitted, according to the word, to be an incontestable evidence of an heir of wrath.

Secondly, Let the heirs of the kingdom behave themfelves fuitable to their character and dignity. Live as having the faith and hope of this glorious kingdom: let your conversation be in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. Let your fouls delight in communion with God while you are on earth, fince you look for your happiness in communion with him in heaven. Let your speech and actions favour of heaven: and in your manner of life look like the country to which you are going; that it may be faid of you, as of Gideon's brethren, Judges viii. 18. Each one resembled the children of a king. Maintain a holy contempt of the world, and of the things of the world. Although others, whose earthly things are their best things, set their hearts upon them, yet it becomes you to fet your feet on them, fince your best things are above. This world is but the country through which lies your road to Immanuel's land. Therefore pass through it as pilgrims and strangers, and dip not into the incumbrances of it, so as to retard you in your journey. It is unworthy of one born to a palace,

to set his heart on a cottage, to dwell there; and of one running for a prize of gold, to go off his way to gather the stones of the brook: but much more it is unworthy of an heir of the kingdom of heaven, to be hid among the stuff of this world, when he should be going on to receive his crown. The prize set before you challenges your utmost zeal, activity, and diligence: and holy courage, resolution, and magnanimity, become those who are to inherit the crown. You cannot come at it without fighting your way to it, through difficulties from without, and from within: but the kingdom before you is sufficient to balance them all, though you should be called to resist even unto blood. Prefer Christ's cross before the world's crown, and wants in the way of duty, before ease and wealth in the way of fin: Choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, Heb. xi. 25. In a common inn, strangers, perhaps, fare better than the children: but here lies the difference, the children are to pay nothing for what they have got, but the strangers get their bill, and must pay compleatly for all they have had. Did we consider the wicked's after-reckoning for all the smiles of common providence which they meet with in the world, we should not grudge them their good things here, nor take it amiss that God keeps our best things last. Heaven will make up all the saints losses, and all tears will be wiped away from their eyes there.

It is worth observing, that there is such a variety of Scripture notions of heaven's happiness, as may suit every afflicted case of the saints. Are they oppressed? The day cometh, in which they shall have the dominion. Is their honour laid in the dust? A throne to sit upon, a crown on their head, and a sceptre in their hand, will raise it up again. Are they reduced to poverty? Heaven is a treasure. If they be forced to quit their own habitations, yet Christ's Father's house is ready for them. Are they driven to the wilderness? There is a city prepared for them. Are they banished from their native country? They shall inherit a better country. If they are deprived of public ordinances, the Lord God

Almighty and the Lamb are the temple there, whither they are going; a temple, the doors of which none can shut. If their life be full of bitterness, heaven is a paradise for pleasure. If they groan under the remains of spiritual bondage, there is a glorious liberty abiding them. Do their defiled garments make them ashamed? The day cometh in which their robes shall be made white, pure, and spotless. The battle against flesh and blood, principalities and powers, is indeed fore; but a glorious triumph awaits them. If the toil and labours of the Christian life be great, there is everlasting rest for them in heaven. Are they judged unworthy of so-ciety in the world? They shall be admitted into the society of angels in heaven. Do they complain of frequent interruptions of their communion with God? There they shall go no more out, but shall see his face for evermore. If they are in darkness here, eternal light is there. If they grapple with death, there they shall have everlasting life. And, to sum up all in one word, He that overcometh shall inherit all things, Rev. xxi. 7. He shall have peace and plenty, profit and pleafure, every thing defireable; full fatisfaction to his most enlarged desires. Let the expectants of heaven, then, lift up their heads with joy, let them gird up their loins, and fo run as they may obtain; trampling on every thing that may hinder them in the way to the kingdom. Let them never account any duty too hard, nor any crofs too heavy, nor any pains too much, fo they may attain the crown of glory.

Lastly, Let those, who have no right to the kingdom of heaven, be stirred up to seek it with all diligence. Now is the time, wherein the children of wrath may become heirs of glory: when the way to everlasting happiness is opened, it is no time to sit still and loiter. Raise up your hearts towards the glory that is to be revealed; and do not be always seeking rest in this perishing earth. What can all your worldly enjoyments avail you, while you have no solid ground to expect heaven after this life is gone? The riches and honours, profits and pleasures, that must be buried with us, and cannot accompany us into another world, are but a wretched

portion, and will leave men comfortless at length. Ah! why are men so fond, in their life-time, to receive their good things? Why are they not rather careful to fecure an interest in the kingdom of heaven, which would never be taken from them, but afford them a portion, to make them happy through the ages of eternity! If you defire honour, there you may have the highest honour, which will last when the world's honours are laid in the dust; if riches, heaven will yield you a treasure; and there are pleasures for evermore. O be not despisers of the pleasant land, neither judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life! But marry the Heir, and heaven shall be your dowry; close with Christ, as he is offered to you in the gospel, and you shall inherit all things. Walk in the way of holiness, and it will lead you to the kingdom. Fight against sin and Satan, and you shall receive the crown. Forfake the world, and the doors of heaven will be opened to receive you.

H E A D VI.

Of HELLL.

MATTH. XXV. 41. Then shall be fay also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

WERE there no other place of eternal lodging but heaven, I should here have closed my discourse of man's eternal state: but seeing in the other world there is a prison for the wicked, as well as a palace for the saints, we must also enquire into that state of everlasting misery; which the worst of men may well bear with, without crying, Art thou come to torment us before the time? since there is yet access to slee from the wrath to come, and all that can be said of it comes short of what the damned will feel; for who knoweth the power of God's anger?

The last thing which our Lord did before he left the earth, was, he lift up his hands, and bleffed his disciples,

Luke xxiv. 50, 51. But the last thing which he will do. before he leaves the throne, is to curse and condemn his enemies; as we learn from the text which contains the dreadful sentence, wherein the everlasting misery of the wicked is wrapped up. In which three things may be taken notice of. First, The quality of the condemned: Te cursed. The Judge finds the curse of the law upon them as transgressors, and fends them away with it from his presence into hell, there to be fully executed uponthem. 2dly, The punishment which they are adjudged to, and to which they were always bound over, by virtue of the curse; and it is two-fold, the punishment of loss, in separation from God and Christ; Depart from me: and the punishment of sense, in most exquisite and extreme torments: Depart from me into fire, 3dly, The aggravations of their torments. (1.) They are ready for them; they are not to expect a moment's-refpite. The fire is prepared, and ready to catch hold of those who are thrown into it. (2.) They will have the fociety of devils in their torments, being thut up with them in hell. They must depart into the same fire, prepared for Beelzebub the prince of devils, and his angels; namely, other reprobate angels, who fell with him, and became devils. It is faid to be prepared for them; because they finned, and were condemned to hell, before man finned. This speaks further terror to the damned, that they must go into the same torments, and place of torment, with the devil and his angels. They hearkened unto his temptations, and they must partake in his torments: his works they would do, and they must receive the wages, which is Death. In this life they joined with devils, in enmity against God and Christ, and the way of holiness; and in the other they must lodge with them. Thus all the goats shall be shut up together; for that name is common to devils and wicked men in Scripture, Lev. xvii. 7. where the word rendered devils properly fignifies bairy ones, or goats, in the shape of which creatures devils delighted much to appear to their worshippers. (3.) The last aggravation of their torment is the eternal duration thereof; they must depart into everlasting fire. This

is what puts the top-stone upon their misery, namely, that it shall never have an end.

DOCTRINE, The wicked shall be shut up, under the curse of God, in everlasting misery, with the devils in hell:

After having proved that there shall be a resurrection of the body, and a general judgment, I think it not needful to insist on proving the truth of suture punishments. The same conscience which there is in men of a suture judgment, bear witness also of the truth of suture punishments. (And that the punishment of the damned shall not be annihilation, or a reducing them to nothing, will be clear in the progress of our discourse.) In treating of this awful subject, I shall enquire into these four things: (1.) The curse under which the damned shall be shut up. (2.) Their misery under that curse. (3.) Their society with devils in this miserable state. (4.) The eternity of the whole.

I. As to the curse, under which the damned shall be thut up in hell; it is the terrible fentence of the law, by which they are bound over to the wrath of God, as transgressors. This curse does not first seize them when standing before the tribunal to receive their sentence; but they were born under it, they led their lives under it in this world, they died under it, rose with it out of their graves; and the Judge finding it upon them, fends them away with it into the pit, where it shall lie on them through all the ages of eternity. By nature all men are under the curse; but it is removed from the elect, by virtue of their union with Christ. It abides on the rest of sinful mankind, and by it they are devoted to destruction, separated to evil, as one may describe the curse from Deut. xxxix. 21. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil. Thus shall the damned for ever be persons devoted to destruction, separated and set apart from among the rest of mankind unto evil, as vessels of wrath, let up as marks for the arrows of Divine wrath; and made the common receptacle and shore of vengeance.

This curse hath its first-fruits on earth, which are a pledge of the whole sump that is to follow. Hence it

is, that as temporal and eternal benefits are bound up together, under the same expressions, in the promise to the Lord's people, as Ifa. xxxv. 10. And the ranfomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion, &c. relating both to the return from Babylon, and to the faints going to their eternal rest in heaven: even so, temporal and eternal miseries, on the enemies of God, are sometimes included under one and the fame expression in the threatening, as Isa. xxx. 33. For Tophet is ordained of old: yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it. Which relates both to the temporal and eternal destruction of the Affyrians, who fell by the hand of the angel before Jerusalem. See also Isa. lxvi. 24. What is that judicial blindness to which many are given up, whom the god of this world hath blinded, (2 Cor. iv. 4.) but the first-fruits of hell and of the curse? Their sun is going down at noon-day; their darkness encreasing, as if it would not stop till it issue in utter darkness. Many a lash in the dark doth conscience give the wicked, which the world doth not hear of: and what is that, but the never dying worm already begun to gnaw them? And there is not one of these but they may call it Joseph, for the Lord shall add another; or rather Gad, for a troop cometh. These drops of wrath are terrible forebodings of the full shower which is to follow. Sometimes they are given up to their evil affections, that they have no more command over them, Rom. i. 26. So their lusts grow up more and more towards perfection, if I may fo speak. As in heaven grace comes to its perfection, so in hell sin arrives at its highest pitch; and as fin is thus advancing upon the man, he is the nearer and liker to hell. There are three things which have a fearful aspect here. First, When every thing that might do good to men's fouls is blafted to them; fo that their bleffings are curfed, (Mal. ii. 2.) Sermons, prayers, admonitions, and reproofs, which are powerful towards others, are quite inefficacious to them. 2dly, When men go on finning ftill, in the face of plain rebukes from the Lord, in ordinances and providences; God meets them with rods in the way of their fin, as it were striking them back; yet they rush forward. What can be more like hell, where the Lotd is always smitting, and the damned always sinning against him? Lastly, When every thing in one's lot is turned into suel to one's lusts. Thus, adversity and prosperity, poverty and wealth, the want of ordinances, and the enjoyment of them, do all but nourish the corruptions of many. Their vitious stomachs corrupt whatever they receive, and all does but encrease noxious humours.

But the full harvest follows, in that misery which they shall for ever lie under in hell; that wrath which, by virtue of the curse, shall come upon them to the uttermost, which is the curse fully executed. This black cloud opens upon them, and the terrible thunder-bolt .ftrikes them, by that dreadful voice from the throne, Depart from me, ye curfed, &c. which will give the whole wicked world a difmal view of what is in the bosom of the curfe. It is, (1.) a voice of extreme indignation and wrath, a furious rebuke from the Lion of the tribe of Judah. His looks will be most terrible to them: his eyes will cast flames of fire on them; and his words will pierce their hearts like envenomed arrows. When he will thus speak them out of his presence for ever, and by his word chase them away from before the throne, they will see how keenly wrath burns in his heart against them for their fins. (2.) It is a voice of extreme difdain and contempt from the Lord. Time was when they were pitied, admonished to pity themselves, and to be the Lord's; yet they despised him, they would none of him: but now they shall be buried out of his fight, under everlasting contempt. (3.) It is a voice of extreme hatred. Hereby the Lord shuts them out of his bowels of love and mercy. Depart, ye curfed; q. d. I cannot endure to look at you; there is not one purpose of good to you in mine heart; nor shall you ever hear one word more of hope from me. Lastly, It is a voice of eternal rejection from the Lord. He commands them to be gone, and so casts them off for ever. Thus the doors of heaven are thut against them; the

gulf is fixed between them and it, and they are driven to the pit. Now were they to cry with all possible earnestness, Lord, Lord, open to us; they will hear nothing but Depart, depart, ye cursed. Thus shall the damned

be shut up under the curse.

Use. First, Let all those who, being yet in their natural state, are under the curse, consider this, and flee to Jesus Christ in time, that they may be delivered from it. How can you fleep in that state, being wrapped in the curse! Jesus Christ is now faying unto you, "Come, ye cursed; I will take the curse from off you, and give you the bleffing." The waters of the fanctuary are now running, to heal the curfed ground; take heed to improve them for that end to your own fouls, and fear it as hell, to get no spiritual advantage thereby. Remember, that the miry places (which are neither sea nor dry land, a fit emblem of hypocrites) and the marsbes (that neither breed fishes, nor bear trees, but the waters of the fanctuary leave them as they find them, in their barrenness) shall not be healed (seeing they spurn the only remedy); they shall be given to salt, (left under eternal barrenness, set up for the monuments of the wrath of God, and concluded for ever under the cursé), Ezek. xlvii. 11. 2dly, Let all cursers consider this, whose mouths are filled with curfing themselves and others. He who cloaths himself with cursing, shall find the curse come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones, (Píal. cix. 18.) if the Lord prevent it not. He shall get all his imprecations against himself fully answered, in the day that he stands before the tribunal of God; and shall find the killing weight of the curse of God, which he now makes light of.

II. I proceed to speak of the misery of the damned under the curse; a misery which the tongues of men and angels cannot sufficiently express. God always acts like himself: no favours can be compared to his, and his wrath and terrors are not to be equalled. As the saints in heaven are advanced to the highest pitch of happiness, so the damned in hell arrive at the height of misery. Two things here I shall soberly enquire into, the punishment of loss, and the punishment of sense, in

hell. But fince these also are such things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, we must (as geographers do) leave a large void for the unknown land, which the

day will discover.

First, The punishment of loss, which the damned shall undergo, is separation from the Lord, as we learn from the text, Depart from me, ye cursed. This will be a stone upon their graves mouth, as the talent of lead, Zech. v. 7, 8. that will hold them down for ever. They shall be eternally separated from God and Christ. Christ is the way to the Father: but the way, as to them, shall be everlastingly blocked up, the bridge shall be drawn, and the great gulf fixed; fo shall they be shut up in a state of eternal separation from God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They will be locally separated from the man Christ, and shall never come into the seat of the bleffed, where he appears in his glory, but be cast out into utter darkness, Matt. xxii. 13. They cannot, indeed, be locally separated from God, they cannot be in a place where he is not; fince he is, and will be, present every where: If I make my bed in hell, says the Pfalmist, behold thou art there, Plal. cxxxix. 8. But they shall be miserable, beyond expression, in a relative separation from God, Though he will be present in the very centre of their souls, (if I may so expressit) while they are wrapped up in fiery flames, in utter darkness, it shall only be to feed them with the vinegar of his wrath, and to punish them with his revenging justice: but they shall never more taste of his goodness and bounty, nor have the least glimpse of hope from. him. They will fee his heart to be absolutely alienated from them, and that it cannot be towards them; but they are the party, against whom the Lord will have innignation for ever. They shall be deprived of the glorious presence and enjoyment of God; they shall have no part in the beatific vision, nor see any thing in God towards them, but one wave of wrath rolling at the back of another. This will bring upon them overwhelming floods of forrow for evermore. They shall never taste of the rivers of pleasures, which the saints in heaven enjoy; but shall have an everlasting winter,

and a perpetual night, because the Sun of Righteousness has departed from them, and so they are left in utter darkness. So great as heaven's happiness is, so great will their loss be; for they can have none of it for ever.

This feparation of the wicked from God, will be, (1.) An involuntary separation. Now they depart from him, they will not come to him; though they are called and entreated to come: but then they shall be driven away from him, when they would gladly abide with him. Although the question, What is thy beloved more than another beloved? is frequent now, amongst the despiters of the gospel, there will be no such question among all the damned crew; for then they will fee that man's happiness is only to be found in the enjoyment of God, and that the loss of him is a loss that can never be balanced. (2.) It will be a total and utter feparation. Though the wicked are, in this life, feparated from God, yet there is a kind of intercourse between them: he gives them many good gifts, and they give him, at least, some good words; so that the peace is not altogether hopeless. But then shall there be a total separation, the damned being cast into utter darkness, where there will not be the least glimmer of light or favour from the Lord; which will put an end to all their fair words to him. Lastly, It shall be a final separation; they will part with him, never more to meet, being shut up under everlasting horror and despair. The match between Jesus Christ and unbelievers, which has fo often been carried forward, and put back again, shall then be broken up for ever: and never shall one meffage of favour or good-will go between the parties any more.

This punishment of loss, in a total and final separation from God, is a misery beyond what mortals can conceive, and which the dreadful experience of the damned can only sufficiently unfold. But that we may have some conception of the horror of it, let these solutions things be considered.

First, God is the chief good, therefore to be separated from him must be the chief evil. Our native

country, our relations, and our life, are good; and therefore to be deprived of them we reckon a great evil; and the better any thing is, so much the greater evil is the loss of it: wherefore, God being the chieff good, and no good comparable to him, there can be no loss so great as the loss of God. The full enjoyment of him is the highest pinnacle of happiness which the creature is capable of arriving at: to be fully and finally separated from him, must then be the lowest step of misery which the rational creature can be reduced to. To be cast off by men, by good men, is heavy: what must it then be to be rejected of God, of goodness itself!

Secondly, God is the fountain of all goodness, from which all goodness flows unto the creatures, and by which it is continued in them, and to them. Whatever goodness or perfection; natural as well as moral, is in: any creature, it is from God, and depends upon him, as the light is from, and depends on, the fun; for every created being, as fuch, is a dependent one. Wherefore a total separation from God, wherein all comfortable communications between God and a rational creature is absolutely blocked up, must of neceffity bring along with it a total eclipse of all light, of comfort, and ease whatever. If there is but one window, or open place, in a house, and that be quite thut up, it is evident there can be nothing but darkness in that house. Our Lord tells us, Mat. xix. 17. . There is none good but one, that is God. Nothing good or comfortable is originally from the creature: whatever good or comfortable thing one finds in one's felf, as health of body, peace of mind; whatever sweetness, rest, pleasure, or delight one finds in other creatures, as in meat, drink, arts and sciences; all these are but some faint rays of Divine perfections communicated from God unto the creature, and depending on a constant influence from him, for their conservation, which failing they would immediately be gone; for it is impossible that any created thing can be to us more or better than what God makes it to be. All the rivulets of comfort which we drink of, within or without

ourselves, come from God as their spring-head; the course of which toward us being stopped, of necessity they must all dry up. So that when God goes, all that is good and comfortable goes with him; all ease and quiet of body and mind, Hos. ix. 12. Wo also to them, when I depart from them. When the wicked are totally and finally separated from him, all that is comfortable in them, or about them, returns to its fountain, as the light goes away with the fun, and darkness succeeds in the room thereof. Thus, in their separation from God, all peace is removed far away from them, and pain in body, and anguish of soul succeed to it: all joy goes, and unmixed forrow fettles in them: all quiet and rest separate from them, and they are filled with horror and rage: hope flies away, and despair seizeth them: common operations of the Spirit, which now restrain them, are withdrawn for ever, and sin comes to its utmost height. Thus we have a difinal view of that horrible spectacle of sin and misery, which a creature proves when totally separated from God, and left to itself; and we may see this separation to be the very hell of hell.

Being separated from God, they are deprived of all good. The good things which they fet their hearts upon in this world, are beyond their reach there. The covetous man cannot enjoy his wealth there, nor the ambitious man his honours, nor the sensual man his pleasures, no, not a drop of water to cool his tongue, Luke xxi. 23. 25. no meat nor drink there to strengthen the faint; no fleep to refresh the weary; and no music. nor pleasant company, to comfort and chear up the forrowful. And as for those good things which they despised in the world, they shall never more hear of them, nor see them. No offers of Christ there, no pardons, no peace; no wells of falvation in the pit of destruction. In one word, they shall be deprived of whatever might comfort them, being totally and finally feparated from God, the fountain of all goodness and comfort.

Thirdly, Man naturally defires to be happy, being conscious to himself that he is not self-sufficient; he

has ever a defire of fomething without himself to make him happy, and the foul being, by its natural make and constitution, capable of enjoying God, and nothing else being commensurable to its desires, it can never have true and solid rest, till it rests in the enjoyment of God. This defire of happiness the rational creature can never lay aside, no, not in hell. Now while the wicked are on earth, they feek their fatisfaction in the creature; and when one fails, they go to another: thus they spend their time in the world, deceiving their own fouls with vain hopes. But in the other world, all comfort in the creatures failing, and the shadows which they are now purfuing vanished in a moment, they shall be totally and finally separated from God, and see they have thus loft him. So the doors of earth and heaven both are shut up against them at once. This will create them unspeakable anguish, while they shall live under an eternal gnawing hunger after happiness, which they certainly know shall never be in the least measure fatisfied, all doors being closed on them. Who then can imagine how this separation from God shall cut the damned to the heart! how they will roar and rage under it! and how it will sting them and gnaw them, through the ages of eternity!

Fourthly, The damned shall know that some are perfeetly happy, in the enjoyment of that God from whom they themselves are separated! and this will aggravate the fense of their loss, that they can never have any share with those happy ones. Being separated from God, they are separated from the society of the glorified faints and angels. They may fee Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, (Luke xvi. 23.) but can never come into their company; being as unclean lepers thrust out without the camp, and excommunicated from the presence of the Lord, and of all his holy ones. It is the opinion of some, that every person in heaven or hell stratt hear and see all that passeth in either state. What her is to be said of this, we have ground from the word to conclude, that the damned shall have a very exquisite knowledge of the happiness of the faints in heaven; for what elfe can be

meant by the rich man in hell feeing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom? One thing is plain, in this case, that their own torments will give them such notions of the happiness of the saints, as a sick man has of health, or a prisoner has of liberty. And as they cannot fail of reflecting on the happiness of those in heaven, without any hope of attaining to contentment with their own lot, so every thought of that happiness will aggravate their loss. It would be a mighty torment to a hungry man, to see others liberally feasting, while he is so chained up, as not to have one crumb to stay his gnawing appetite. To bring music and dancing before a man labouring under extreme pains, would but encrease his anguish: how then will the songs of the blessed, in their enjoyment of God, make the

damned rore under their separation from him!

Fiftbly, They will remember, that time was when they might have been made partakers of the bleffed company of the faints, in their enjoyment of God: and this will aggravate their fense of the loss. All may remember, that there was once a possibility of it; that they were once in the world, in some corners of which the way of falvation was laid open to men's view; and may wish they had gone round the world till they had found it out. Despisers of the gospel will remember, with bitterness, that Jesus Christ, with all his benefits, was offered to them; that they were exhorted, entreated, and pressed to accept, but would not; and that they were warned of the misery which they seel, and exhorted to flee from the wrath to come, but they would not hearken. The gospel-offer slighted, will make a hot hell, and the loss of offered heaven will be a finking weight on the spirits of unbelievers in the pit. Some will remember, that there was a probability of their being eternally happy; that once they feemed to stand fair for it, and were not far from the kingdom of God: that they had once almost consented to the blessed bargain; the pen was in their hand (as it were) to sign the marriage-contract between Christ and their souls; but unhappily they dropped it, and turned back from the Lord to their lusts again. Others will remember, that they thought themselves sure of heaven, but being blinded with pride and self-conceit, they were above ordinances, and beyond instruction, and would not examine their state, which was their ruin: but then they will in vain wish that they had reputed themselves the worst of the congregation in which they lived; and curse the fond conceit which they had of themselves, and that others had of them too. Thus it will sting the damned, that they might have escaped this loss.

Lastly, They will see the loss to be irrecoverable; that they must eternally lie under it, never, never to be repaired. Might the damned, after millions of ages in hell, regain what they have loft, it would be fome ground of hope: but the prize is gone, and never can be recovered. There are two things which will pierce them to the heart: (1.) That they never knew the worth of it, till it was irrecoverably lost. Should a man give away an earthen pot full of gold for a trifle, never knowing what was in it, till it were quite gone from him, and past recovery, how would this foolish action gall him, upon the discovery of the riches in it! Such a one's case may be a faint resemblance of the case of despisers of the gospel, when in hell they lift up their eyes, and behold that to their torment, which they will not fee now to their falvation. (2.) That they have lost it for dross and dung; fold their part of heaven, and not enriched themselves with the price. They lost heaven for earthly profits and pleasures, and now both are gone together from them. The drunkard's cups are gone, the covetous man's gain, the voluptuous man's carnal delights, and the fluggard's ease: nothing is left them to comfort them now. The happiness which they lost remains indeed, but they can have no part in it for ever.

Use. Sinners, be persuaded to come to God, through Jesus Christ, uniting with him through the Mediator; that you may be preserved from this fearful separation from him. O be afraid to live in a state of separation from God, lest that which you now make your choice, become your eternal punishment hereaster. Do not reject

communion with God; cast not off the communion of faints; for it will be the mifery of the damned to be driven out from that communion. Cease to build up the wall of separation between God and you, by continuing in your finful courses: repent, rather, in time, and so pull it down; left the top-stone be laid upon it, and it stand for ever between you and happiness. Tremble at the thoughts of rejection and separation from God. By whoever men are rejected on earth, they ordinarily find some pity; but if you be thus separated from God, you will find all doors shut against you. You will find no pity from any in heaven; neither faints nor angels will pity them whom God has utterly cast off: none will pity you in hell, where there is no love but loathing; all being loathed of God, loathing him, and loathing one another. This is a day of losses and fears. I shew you a loss you would do well to fear in time; be afraid lest you lose God; if you do, eternity will be spent in roaring out lamentations for this loss. O horrid stupidity! Men are in a mighty care and concern to prevent worldly lofses: but they are in hazard of losing the enjoyment of God for ever and ever; in hazard of losing heaven, the communion of the bleffed, and all good things for foul and body in another world; yea, as careless in that matter, as if they were incapable of thought. compare this day with the day which our text aims at. To-day heaven is opened for them who hitherto have rejected Christ; and yet there is room, if they will come: but that day the doors shall be shut. Now Christ is saying unto you, Come: then he will say, Depart; seeing you would not come when you were bidden. Now pity is shewn; the Lord pities you, his fervants pity you, and tell you that the pit is before you, and cry to you, that you do yourselves no harm: but then shall you have no pity from God or

SECONDLY, The damned shall be punished in hell, with the punishment of fense; they must depart from God into everlasting fire. I am not disposed to dispute what kind of fire it is which they shall depart into, and

be tormented by for ever, whether a material fire or not. Experience will more than fatisfy the curiofity of those who are disposed rather to dispute about it, than to seek how to escape it. Neither will I meddle with that question, Where is it? It is enough, that the worm which never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched, will be found somewhere by impenitent sinners. But, (1.) I shall prove that whatever kind of fire it is, it is more vehement and terrible than any fire we on earth are acquainted with. (2.) I shall speak of

some properties of these siery torments.

As to the first of these; burning is the most terrible punishment, and brings the most exquisite pain and torment with it. By what reward could a man be induced to hold only his hand in the slame of a candle but for one hour? All imaginable pleasures on earth will never prevail with the most vuluptuous man to venture to lodge but one half hour in a burning fiery furnace; nor would all the wealth in the world prevail with the most covetous to do it. Yet, on much lower terms do most men, in effect, expose themselves to everlasting fire in hell, which is more vehement and terrible than any fire we on earth are acquainted with; as will appear by the following considerations.

First, As in heaven, grace being brought to its perfection, profit and pleature also arrive at their height there; so sin, being come to its height in hell, the evil of punishment doth also arrive at its perfection there. Wherefore, as the joys in heaven are far greater than any joys which the saints obtain on earth, so the punishments of hell must be greater than any earthly torments whatever; not only in respect of the continuance of them, but also in respect of vehemency and

exquisiteness.

Secondly, Why are the things of another world represented to us in an earthly dress, in the word, but because the weakness of our capacities in such matters (which the Lord is pleased to condescend unto) requires it; it being always supposed, that the things of the other world are in their kind more perfect than those by which they are represented? When heaven is re-

presented to us under the notion of a city, with gates of pearl, and the street of gold, we expect not to find gold and pearls there, which are fo mightily prized on earth, but something more excellent than the finest and most precious things in the world: when, therefore, we hear of hell-fire, it is necessary that we understand by it something more vehement, piercing, and tormenting, than any fire ever feen by our eyes. And here it is worth confidering, that the torments of hell are held forth under feveral other notions than that of fire fimply: and the reason of it is plain, namely, that hereby what of horror is wanting in one notion of hell, is supplied by another. Why is heaven's happiness represented under the various notions of a treasure, a paradise, a feast, a rest, &c. but that there is not one of these things sufficient to express it? Even so, hell-torments are represented under the notion of fire, which the damned are cast into. A dreadful representation indeed! Yet not sufficient to express the misery of the state of sinners in them. Wherefore, we hear also of the second death, Rev. xx. 6. for the damned in hell shall be ever dying: of the wine-press of the wrath of God, (chap. xiv. 19.) wherein they will be trodden in anger, trampled in the Lord's fury, (Ifa. lxiii. 3.) pressed, broken, and bruised, without end: the worm that dieth not, (Mark ix. 44.) which shall eternally gnaw them: a bottomless pit, where they will be ever finking, Rev. xx. 3. It is not fimply called a fire, but the lake of fire and brimstone, (ver. 19.) A lake of fire burning with brimstone, (chap. xix. 20.) than which one can imagine nothing more dreadful. Yet, because fire gives light, and light (as Solomon observes, Eccl. xi. 7.) is sweet, there is no light there, but darkness, utter darkness, Mat. xxv. 30. For they must have an everlasting night, since nothing can be there which is in any measure comfortable or refreshing.

Thirdly, Our fire cannot affect a spirit, but by way of sympathy with the body, to which it is united: but hell-fire will not only pierce into the bodies, but directly into the souls of the damned: for it is prepared for the devil and his angels, those wicked spirits, whom

no fire on earth can hurt. Job complains heavily, under the chastifement of God's fatherly hand, saying, The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit, Job vi. 4. But how will the spirits of the damned be pierced with the arrows of revenging justice! how will they be drunk with the poison of the curse on these arrows! how vehement must that fire be, that pierceth directly into the soul, and makes an everlasting burning in the spirit, the most lively and tender part of a man, wherein wounds

or pains are most intolerable!

Lastly, The preparation of this fire proves the inexpreffible vehemency and dreadfulness of it. The text calls it prepared fire, yea, the prepared fire, by way of eminency. As the three children were not cast into an ordinary fire, but a fire prepared on a particular defign, which therefore was exceeding hot, the furnace being heated feven times more than ordinary, Dan. ii. 22. So the damned shall find in hell prepared fire, the like to which was never prepared by human art: it is a fire of God's own preparing, the product of infinite wisdom, on a particular design, to demonstrate the most strict and severe Divine justice against sin; which may fufficiently evidence to us the inconceivable exquifiteness thereof. God always acts in a peculiar way, becoming his own infinite greatness, whether for or against the creature. Therefore, as the things which he hath prepared for them that love him, are great and good beyond expression or conception; so one may conclude, that the things he has prepared against those who hate him, are great and terrible beyond what men can either fay or think of them. The pile of Tophet is fire and much wood (the coals of fire are coals of juniper, a kind of wood which, fet on fire, burns most fiercely, Pfal. cxx. 4.) and the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it, Isa. xxx. 33. Fire is more or less violent, according to the matter of it, and the breath by which it is blown: what heart, then, can fully conceive the horror of coals of juniper, blown up with the breath of the Lord? Nay, God himself will be a confuming fire (Deut. iv. 24.) to the danned; intimately present, as a devouring fire, in their souls and bodies. It is a fearful thing to fall into a fire, or to be shut up in a fiery furnace, on earth; but the terror of these vanisheth, when we consider how fearful it is to fall into the hands of the living God, which is the lot of the damned; for who shall dwell with devouring fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Isa. xxxiii. 14.

As to the fecond point proposed, namely, the pro-

perties of the fiery torments in hell.

First, They will be universal torments, every part of the creature being tormented in that flame. When a person is cast into a burning fiery furnace, the fire makes its way into the very bowels, and leaves no member untouched: what part, then, can have ease, when the damned fwim in a lake of fire burning with brimstone? There will their bodies be tormented, and scorched for ever. And as they finned, so thall they be tormented in all the parts thereof, that they shall have no found fide to turn them to: for what foundness or ease can be to any part of that body, which being feparated from God, and all refreshment from him, is still in the pangs of the second death, ever dying, but never dead? But as the foul was chief in finning, it will be chief in fuffering too, being brimful of the wrath of a fin-revenging God. The damned shall ever be under the deepest impressions of God's vindictive justice against them: and this fire will melt their fouls within them like wax. Who knows the power of that wrath, which had fuch an effect on the Mediator, standing in the room of finners? Pial, xxii. 14. My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels, Their minds shall be filled with the terrible apprehensions of God's implaçable wrath. And whatever they can think upon, past, present, or to come, will aggravate their torment and anguish. Their will shall be crossed in all things for ever more: as their will was ever contrary to the will of God's precepts, fo God, in his dealing with them in the other world, shall have war with their will for ever. What they would have, they shall not in the least obtain; but what they would not, shall be bound upon

them without remedy. Hence, no pleasant affection shall ever spring up in their hearts any more: their love of complacency, joy, and delight, in any object whatever, shall be plucked up by the roots; and they will be filled with hatred, fury, and rage, against God, themselves, and their fellow-creatures, whether happy in heaven, or miserable in hell, as they themselves are. They will be funk in forrow, racked with anxiety, filled with horror, galled to the heart with fretting, and continually darted with despair; which will make them weep, gnash their teeth, and blaspheme for ever, Mat. xxii. 13. Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Rev. xvi. 21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great. Conscience will be a worm to gnaw and prey upon them: remorfe for their fins shall seize them, and torment them for ever, and they shall not be able to shake it off, as once they did; for in hell-their worm dieth not, Mark ix. 45, 46. Their memory will ferve but to aggravate their torment, and every new reflection will bring another pang of anguish, Luke xvi. 25. But Abraham faid, (viz. to the rich man in hell) Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receiveds thy good things.

Secondly, The torments in hell are manifold. Put the case, that a man were, at one and the same time, under the violence of the gout, gravel, and whatever diseases and pains have ever met together in one body; the torment of such a one would be but light in comparison with the torments of the damned: for as in hell there is an absence of all that is good and desireable, so there is the confluence of all evils there; since all the effects of sin and of the curse take their place in it, after the last judgment, Rev. xx. 14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of sire. There they will find a prison they can never escape out of; a lake of sire, wherein they will be ever swimming and burning; a pit, whereof they will never find a bottom. The worm, that dieth not, shall feed on them as on bodies which are interred: the pire that is not

quenched shall devour them, as dead bodies which are burned. Their eyes shall be kept in blackness of darkness, without the least comfortable gleam of light; their eurs filled with the frightful yellings of the infernal crew. They shall taste nothing but the vinegar of God's wrath, the dregs of the cup of his fury. The stench of the burning lake of brimstone will be the smell there; and they shall feel extreme pains for evermore.

Thirdly, They will be most exquisite and vehement torments, causing weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, Mat. xiii. 42. and xxii. 13. They are represented to us under the notion of pangs in travail, which are very sharp and exquisite. So says the rich man in hell, Luke xvi. 24. I am tormented (to wit, as one in the pangs of child-bearing) in this flame. Ah! dreadful pangs! horrible travel, in which both foul and body are in pangs together! helpless travail, hopeless and endlets! The word used for hell, Mat. v. 22. and in diverse other places of the New Testament, properly denotes the valley of Hinnom; the name being taken from the valley of the children of Hinnom, in which was Tophet, (2 Kings xxiii. 10.) where idolaters offered their children to Molech. This is faid to have been a great brazen idol, with arms like a man's: which being heated by fire within it, the child was fet in the burning arms of the idol; and, that the parent might not hear the shrieks of the child burning to death, they beat drums in the time of the horrible facrifice; whence the place had the name of Tophet. Thus the exquisiteness of the torments in hell are pointed out to us. Some have endured grievous tortures on earth, with furprifing obstinacy, and undaunted courage: but men's courage will fail them there, when they find themselves fallen into the hands of the living God, and no escape to be expected for ever. It is true, that there will be degrees of torment in hell: It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Zidon, than for Chorazin and Bethfaida, Matt. xi. 21, 22. But the least load of wrath there will be insupportable; for how can the heart of the creature endure, or his hands be strong, when God himself is consuming fire to him?

When the tares are bound in bundles for the fire, there will be bundles of covetous persons, of drunkards, profane swearers, unclean persons, formal hypocrites, unbelievers and despifers of the gospel, and the like: the feveral bundles being cast into hell fire, some will burn more keenly than others, according as their fins have been more heinous than those of others, a fiercer flame shall fieze the bundle of the profane, than the bundle of unsanctified moralists; the furnace will be hotter to those who sinned against light, than to those who lived in darkness, Luke xii. 47, 48. That fervant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. But the sentence common to them all, (Mat. xiii. 30.) Bind them in bundles to burn them, speaks the great vehemency and exquisiteness of the lowest degree of torment in hell.

Fourthly, They will be uninterrupted; there is no intermission there; no ease, no, not for a moment. They shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever, Rev. xx. 10. Few are so tossed in this world, but sometimes they get rest; but the damned shall get none; they took their rest in the time appointed of God for labour. No storms are rarely seen, without some space between showers: but no intermission in the storm that falls on the wicked in hell. There deep will be calling unto deep, and the waves of wrath continually rolling over them. There the heavens will be always black to them, and they shall have a perpetual night, but no rest, Rev.

xiv. 11. They have no rest day nor night.

Fifthly, They will be unpitied. The punishments inflicted on the greatest malesactors on earth, draw forth some compassion from the spectators; but the damned shall have none to pity them. God will not pity them, but laugh at their calamity, Prov. i. 26. The blessed company in heaven shall rejoice in the execution of God's righteous judgment, and sing while the smoke riseth up for ever, Rev. xix. 3. And again they said, Hallehijah: and her smokerose up for ever and ever. No compassion can be expected from the devil and his

angels, who delight in the ruin of the children of men, and are and will be for ever void of pity. Neither will one pity another there, where every one is weeping and gnashing his teeth, under his own insupportable anguish and pain. There natural affections will be extinguished: the parents will not love their children, nor children their parents: the mother will not pity the daughter in these slames, nor will the daughter pity the mother: the son will shew no regard to his father there, nor the servant to his master, where every one

will be roaring under his own torment.

Lastly, To compleat their misery, their torments shall be eternal, Rev. xiv. 11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Ah! what a frightful case is this, to be tormented in the whole body and soul, and that not with one kind of torment, but many; all of these most exquisite, and all this without any intermission, and without pity from any! What heart can conceive those things without horror? Nevertheles, if this most miserable case were at length to have an end, that would afford some comfort; but the torments of the damned will have no end; of which more afterwards.

Use. Learn from this, (1.) The evil of fin. It is a ftream that will carry down the finner, till he be fwallowed up in the ocean of wrath. The pleasures of fin are bought too dear, at the rate of everlasting bernings. What availed the rich man's purple cloathing and fumptuous fare, when in hell he was encircled by purple flames, and could not have a drop of water to cool his tongue? Alas! that men should indulge themfelves in fin, which will be fuch bitterness in the end; that they should drink so greedily of the poisonous cup, and hug that serpent in their bosom, that will sting them to the heart, and gnaw out their bowels at length! (2.) What a God he is, with whom we have to do! what hatred he bears to fin, and how feverely he punisheth it! Know the Lord to be most just, as well as most merciful! and think not that he is such an one as you are: away with the fatal mistake, ere it be too late, Pfal. 1. 21, 22. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyfelf; but I will reprove thee, and fet them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. The fire prepared for the devil and his angels, as dark as it is, will serve to discover God to be a severe revenger of sin. Lastly, The absolute necessity of slying to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith; the same necessity of repentance, and holiness of heart and life. The avenger of blood is pursuing thee. O sinner, haste and escape to the city of refuge. Wash now in the fountain of the Mediator's blood, that you may not perish in the lake of sire. Open thy heart to him, lest the pit close its mouth on thee. Leave thy sins, else they will ruin thee: kill them, else they will be

thy death for ever.

Let not the terror of hell-fire put thee upon hardening thy heart more, as it may do, if thou entertain that wicked thought, viz. There is no hope, Jer. ii. 25. which, perhaps, is more common among the hearers of the gospel than many are aware of. But there is hope for the worst of sinners, who will come unto Jefus Christ. If there are no good qualifications in thee (as certainly there can be none in a natural man, none in any man, but what are received from Christ in him), know, that he has not fuspended thy welcome on any good qualifications: do thou take him and his salvation, freely offered unto all to whom the gospel comes. Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, Rev. xxii. 17. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no ways cast out, John vi. 37. It is true, that thou art a finful creature, and canst not repent; thou art unholy, and canst not make thyself holy: nay, thou hast attempted to repent, to forfake fin, and to be holy, but still missed of repentance, reformation, and holiness; and therefore, thou faidst, There is hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go. Truly, no marvel that the fuccess has not answered thy exepctation, fince thou hast always begun thy work amiss. But do thou, first of all, honour God, by believing the testimony which he has given of his Son, namely, that eternal life is in him: and honour the Son of God, by

believing on him, that is, embracing and falling in with the free offer of Christ, and of his salvation from sin and from wrath, made to thee in the gospel, trusting in him confidently for righteousness for thy justification, and also for fanctification, seeing of God he is made unto us both righteousness and sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30. Then, if thou hast as much credit to give to the word of God, as thou wouldst allow to the word of an honeft man offering thee a gift, and faying, Take it, and it is thine, thou mayest believe that God is thy God, Christis thine, his falvation is thine, thy fins are pardoned, thou hast strength in him for repentance and for holiness; for all these are made over to thee in the free offer of the gospel. Believing on the Son of God, thou art justified, the curse is removed. But while it lies upon thee, how is it possible that thou shouldest bring forth the fruits of holiness? But the curse is removed, that death which feized on thee with the first Adam, (according to the threatening, Gen. ii. 17.) is taken away. In consequence of which, thou shalt find the bands of wickedness (now holding thee fast in impenitency) broken afunder, as the bands of that death; fo as thou wilt be able to repent indeed, from the heart: thou shalt find the Spirit of life, on whose departure that death enfued, return to thy foul; fo as thenceforth thou shall be enabled to live unto righteoufnefs. No man's case is so bad, but it may be mended this way, in time, to be perfectly right in eternity: and no man's case is so good, but, another way being taken, it will be marred for time and eternity too.

III. The damned shall have the society of devils in their miserable state in hell: for they must depart into sire prepared for the devil and his angels. O horrible company! O frightful association! Who would choose to dwell in a place haunted with devils? To be confined to the most pleasant spot of earth, with the devil and his infernal suries, would be a most terrible confinement. How would men's hearts sail them, and their hair stand up, sinding themselves environed with the hellish crew! But ah! how much more terrible must

it be, to be cast with the devils into one fire, locked up with them in one dungeon, shut up with them in one pit! To be closed up in a den of roaring lions, girded about with ferpents, furrounded with venomous asps, and to have the bowels eaten out by vipers, all together and at once, is a comparison too low, to shew the misery of the damned, shut up in hell with the devil and his angels. They go about now as roaring lions, feeking whom they may devour; but then shall they be confined in their den with their prey. They shall be filled to the brim with the wrath of God, and receive the full torment (Mat. viii. 29.) which they tremble in expectation of, (James ii. 19.) being cast into the fire prepared for them. How will these lions roar and tear! how will these serpents hiss! these dragons vomit out fire! What horrible anguish will seize the damned, finding themselves in the lake of fire with the devil, who deceived them; drawn thither with the filken cords of temptation, by these wicked spirits; and bound with them in everlasting chains under darkness! Rev. XX. 10. And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

O that men would consider this in time, renounce the devil and his lusts, and join themselves to the Lord in faith and holiness. Why should men choose that company in this world, and delight in that society, which they would not desire to affociate with in the other world? Those who like not the company of the saints on earth, will get none of it in eternity; but as godless company is their delight now, they will afterwards get enough of it, when they have eternity to pass, in the roaring and blaspheming society of devils and reprobates in hell. Let those, who invocate the devil to take them, soberly consider, that the company so often invited will be terrible at last, when come.

IV. And LASTLY, Let us consider the eternity of the whole, the everlasting continuance of the miserable

state of the damned in hell.

First, If I could, I would shew, what eternity is, I

mean the creature's eternity. But who can measure the waters of the ocean, or who can tell you the days, years, and ages of eternity, which are infinitely more than the drops of the ocean? None can comprehend eternity, but the eternal God. Eternity is an ocean whereof no one will ever fee the shore; it is a deep, where we can find no bottom; a labyrinth, from whence we cannot extricate ourselves, and where we shall ever lose the door. There are two things we may say of it, (1.) It has a beginning. God's eternity has no beginning, but the creature's has. Once there was no lake of fire; and those who have been there, for some thousands of years, were once in time as we now are. But, (2.) It shall never have an end. The first who entered into eternity of woe, is as far from the end of it, as the last who shall go thither will be at his entry. They who have launched out furthest into that ocean, are as far from land, as they were the first moment they went into it: and thousands of ages after this, they will be as far from it as ever. Wherefore eternity, in respect of us, is a duration that hath a beginning, but no end. It is a beginning without a middle, a beginning without an end. After millions of years passed in it, still it is a beginning. God's wrath in hell, will ever be the wrath to come. But there is no middle in eternity. When millions of ages are past in eternity, what is past bears no proportion to what is to come; no, not so much as one drop of water, falling from the tip of one's finger, bears to all the waters of the ocean. There is no end of it: while God is, it shall be. It is an entry without any end to it, a continual fuccession of ages, a glass always running, which shall never run out.

Observe the continual succession of hours, days, months, and years, how one still sollows upon another; and think of eternity, wherein there is a continual succession, without end. When you go out in the night, and behold the stars of heaven, how they can be numbered for multitude, think of the ages of eternity; considering also, that there is a certain definite number of stars, but no number of the ages of eternity. When

you fee water running, think how vain a thing it would be to fit down by it, and wait till it should run out, that you may pass over; observe how new water still succeeds to that which passeth by you: and therein you have an image of eternity, which is a river that never dries up. They who wear rings, have an image of eternity on their fingers; and they who handle the wheel, have an emblem of eternity before them: for to which part foever of the ring or wheel we look, we still fee another part beyond it: and on whatever moment of eternity you meditate, there is still another beyond it. When you are abroad in the fields, and behold the blades of grass on the earth, which no man can reckon; think for yourselves, that were there as many thousands of years to come, as there are blades of grass on the ground, even those would have an end at length, but eternity will have none. When you look to a mountain, imagine in your hearts how long it would be ere that mountain should be removed, by a little bird coming but once every thousand years, and carrying away but one grain of the dust thereof at once: the mountain would at length be removed that way, and brought to an end; but eternity will never end. Suppose this with respect to all the mountains of the earth; nay, with respect to the whole globe of the earth; the grains of dust, of which the whole earth is made up, are not infinite, and therefore the last grain would at length come to be carried away, as above; yet eternity would be in effect but beginning.

These are some rude drafts of eternity: and now add misery and woe to this eternity, what tongue can express it? What heart can conceive it? In what balance

can that mifery and that woe be weighed?

Secondly, Let us take a view of what is eternal, in the state of the damned in hell. Whatever is included in the fearful torments of their state, is everlasting: therefore all the doleful ingredients of their miserable state will be everlasting; they will never end. The text expressly declares the fire, into which they must depart, to be everlasting fire. And our Lord essewhere tells us, that in hell the fire shall never be quenched, (Mark

ix. 43.) with an eye to the valley of Hinnom, in which, besides the before-mentioned fire, for burning the children to Moloch, there was also another fire burning continually, to consume the dead carcases, and filth of Jerusalem: so the Scripture, representing hell-fire, by the fire of that valley, speaks it not only to be most exquisite, but also everlasting. Seeing, then, the damned must depart, as cursed ones, into everlasting fire, it is

evident that, First, The damned themselves shall be eternal; they will have a being for ever, and will never be substantially destroyed, or annihilated. To what end is the fire eternal, if those who are cast into it be not eternally in it? It is plain, that the everlasting continuance of the fire is an aggravation of the misery of the damned. But, furely, if they are annihilated, or fubstantially deftroyed, it would be all the same to them, whether the fire be everlasting, or not; nay, but they depart into everlasting fire, to be everlastingly punished in it, Mat. xxv. 46. These shall go away into everlasting punishment. Thus, the execution of the sentence is a certain discovery of the meaning of it. The worm, that dieth not, must have a subject to live in. They who shall have no rest day nor night, (Rev. xvi. 11.) but shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever, (chap. xx. 10.) will certainly have a being for ever and ever, and not be brought into a state of eternal rest in annihilation. Destroyed indeed they shall be: but their destruction will be an everlasting destruction, (2 Thes. i. 9.) a destruction of their well-being, but not of their being. What is destroyed, is not therefore annihilated: Art thou come to torment us? faid the devil unto Jesus Christ, Luke iv. 34. The devils are afraid of torment, not of annihilation, Mat. viii. 29. Art thou come bither to torment us before the time? The state of the damned is indeed a state of death: but such a death it is, as is opposite only to a happy life; as is clear from other notions of their state, which necessarily include eternal existence, of which before. As they who are dead in fin, are dead to God and holiness, yet live to fin: so dying in hell, they live, but separated from God and his favour, in which is life, Pfal. xxx. 5. They shall ever be under the pangs of death; ever dying, but never dead, or absolutely void of life. How desireable would such a death be to them! but it will slee from them for ever. Could each one kill another there, or could they, with their own hands, tear themselves into lifeless pieces, their misery would quickly be at an end: but there they must live, who chose death, and resused life; for there death lives, and the end ever begins.

Secondly, The curse shall lie upon them eternally, as the everlasting chain, to hold them in the everlasting fire; a chain that shall never be loosed, being fixed for ever about them by the dreadful sentence of the eternal judgment. This chain, which spurns the united force of devils held fast by it, is too strong to be broken by men, who being solemnly anathematized, and devoted to destruction, can never be restored to any other use.

Thirdly, Their punishment shall be eternal, Matth. xxv. 46. These shall go away into everlasting punishment. They will be for ever separated from God and Christ, and from the fociety of the holy angels and faints; between whom and them an impassable gulph will be fixed, Luke xvi. 26. Between us and you (lays Abraham, in the parable, to the rich man in hell) there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. They shall for ever have the horrible society of the devil and his angels. There will be no change of company for ever, in that region of darkness. Their torment in the fire will be everlasting: they must live for ever in it. Several authors, both ancient and modern, tell us of earth-flax, or Salamander's hairs; that cloth made of it, being cast into the fire, is so far from being burnt or confumed, that it is only made clean thereby, as other things are by washing. But however that is, it is certain that the damned shall be tormented for ever and ever in hell-fire, and not substantially destroyed, Rev. xx. 10. Indeed nothing is annihilated by fire, but only diffolved. Of what nature foever hell-fire is, no question the same God, who kept the bodies of the three children from burning in

Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, can also keep the bodies of the damned from any such dissolution by hell-

fire, as may infer privation of life.

Lastly, Their knowledge and sense of their misery shall be eternal, and they shall affuredly know that it will be eternal. How defireble would it be to them, to have their fenses for ever blocked up, and to lose the consciousness of their own misery: as one may rationally suppose it to fare at length with some, in the punishment of death inflicted on them on earth, and as it is with some mad people; but that agrees not with the notion of torment for ever and ever, nor the worm that dieth not. Nay, they will ever have a lively feeling of their mifery, and the strongest impressions of the wrath of God against them. And that dreadful intimation of the eternity of their punishment, made to them by their Judge at their sentence, will fix such impressions of the eternity of their milerable state upon their minds, as they will never be able to lay afide, but it will continue with them evermore. to compleat their misery. This will fill them with everlasting despair, a most tormenting passion, which will continually rend their hearts, as it were, in a thoufand pieces. To fee floods of wrath ever coming, and never cease; to be ever in torment, and to know that there shall never, never be a release, will be the topstone put on the misery of the damned. If hope deferred maketh the heart fick, Prov. xiii. 12. how killing will be hope rooted up, flain out-right, and buried for ever out of the creature's fight! This will fill them with hatred and rage against God, their known irreconcileable enemy: and under it they will roar for ever, like wild buils in a net, and fill the pit with blafphemies evermore.

Lastly, I might here shew the reasonableness of the eternity of the punishment of the damned; but having already spoken of it, in vindicating the justice of God, in his subjecting men, in their natural state, to eternal wrath, I only re-mind you of three things. (1.) The infinite dignity of the party offended by sin requires an infinite punishment to be inflicted, for the vindication

of his honour; fince the demerit of fin rifeth according to the dignity and excellency of the person against whom it is committed. The party offended is the great God, the chief good: the offender a vile worm; in respect of perfection, infinitely distant from God, to whom he is indebted for all that ever he had, implying any good or perfection whatever. This then requires infinite punishment to be inflicted on the finner, which, fince it cannot in him be infinite in value, must be infinite in duration, that is to say, eternal. Sin is a kind of infinite evil, as it wrongs the infinite God: and the guilt and defilement thereof is never taken away, but endures for ever, unless the Lord himself in mercy removes it. God, who is offended, is eternal, his being never comes to an end: the finful foul is immortal, and the man shall live for ever: the finner being without strength (Rom. v. 6.) to expiate his guilt, can never put away the offence, therefore it ever remains, unless the Lord puts it away himself, as in the elect, by his Son's blood. Wherefore the party offended, the offender, and the offence, ever remaining, the punishment cannot but be eternal. (2.) The finner would have continued the course of his provocations against God, for ever without end, if God had not put a check to it by death. As long as they were capable to act against him, in this world, they did it : and therefore justly will he act against them while he is; that is, for ever. God, who judgeth of the will, intents, and inclinations of the heart, may justly do against finners, in punishing, as they would have done against him in sinning. Lastly, (though I put not the stress of the matter here, yet) it is just and reasonable, that the damned suffer eternally, since they will fin eternally in hell, gnashing their teeth (Mat. viii. 12.) under their pain, in rage, envy, and grudge, (compare Acts vii. 54. Psal. cxii. 10. Luke xiii. 28.) and blaspheming God there (Rev. xvi. 21.) while they are driven away in their wickedness, Prov. xiv. 32. That the wicked be punished for their wickedness, is just: and it is no ways inconsistent with justice, that the being of the creature be continued for

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ever: wherefore it is just, that the damned, who continue wicked eternally, do fuffer eternally for their wickedness. The misery under which they fin, can neither free them from the debt of obedience, nor excuse their finning, and make it blameless. The creature, as a creature, is bound unto obedience to his Creator, and no punishment inflicted on him can free him from it, any more than the malefactor's prison, irons, whipping, and the like, fet him at liberty to commit again the crimes for which he is imprisoned or whipt. Neither can the torments of the damned excuse, or make blameless their horrible sinning under them, any more than exquisite pains inflicted upon men on earth, can excuse their murmuring, fretting, blaspheming against God under them. It is not the wrath of God, but their own wicked nature, that is the true cause of their sinning under it; for the holy Jesus bore the wrath of God, without so much as one unbecoming thought of God, and far less any one un-

becoming word.

Use I. Here is a measuring reed: O that men would apply it! First, Apply it to your own time in this world, and you will find your time to be very short. A prospect of much time to come proves the ruin of many fouls. Men will be reckoning their time by years, (like the rich man, Luke xii. 19, 20.) when it may be there are not many hours of it to run. But reckon as you will, laying your time to the meafuring reed of eternity, you will fee your age is as nothing. What a small and inconsiderable point is sixty, eighty, or a hundred, in respect of eternity? Compared with eternity, there is a greater disproportion, than between a hair's breadth and the circumference of the whole earth. Why do we fleep, then, in fuch a short day, while we are in hazard of losing rest through the long night of eternity? 2dly, Apply it to your endeavours for falvation, and they will be found very scanty. When men are pressed to diligence in their salvationwork, they are ready to fay, To what purpose is this waste? Alas! if it were to be judged by our diligence, what it is which we have in view; as to the most part, of us, no man could thereby conjecture that we have eternity in view. If we duly confidered eternity, we could not but conclude, that we ought to leave no means appointed of God unemployed, till we get our falvation fecured: to refuse rest or comfort in any thing, till we are sheltered under the wings of the Mediator; to pursue our great interest with the utmost vigour; to cut off lusts, dear as right-hands and right-eyes; to set our faces resolutely against all difficulties, and fight our way through all opposition made by the devil, the world, and the slesh; are all of them together little enough for eternity.

Use II. Here is a balance of the fanctuary, by which we may understand the lightness of what is falsely thought weighty; and the weight of some things, by

many reckoned to be very light.

First, Some things seem very weighty, which, weighed in this balance, will be found very light. (1.) Weigh the world, and all that is in it, the luft of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and the whole will be found light in the balance of eternity. Weigh herein all worldly profits, gains, and advantages; and you will quickly see, that a thousand worlds will not be adequate to the cost of the eternity of woc. F_{0r} what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Mat. xvi. 26. Weigh the pleafures of fin, which are but for a feafon, with the fire that is everlafting, and you shew yourselves to be fools and mad-men, to run the hazard of the one for the other. (2.) Weigh you afflictions in this balance, and you will find the heaviest of them very light, in respect of the weight of eternal anguish. Impatience under affliction, especially when worldly troubles so imbitter men's spirits, that they cannot relish the glad tidings of the gospel, speaks great regardlessness of eternity. As a small and inconsiderable loss, will be very little at heart with him, who fees himself in danger of losing his whole estate: so troubles in the world will appear but light, to him who has a lively view of eternity. Such a one will stoop, and take up his cross, whatever it be, thinking it enough to escape eternal wrath,

(3.) Weigh the most difficult and uneasy duties of religion here, and you will no more reckon the yoke of Christ insupportable, Repentance and bitter mourning. for fin, on earth, are very light in comparison of eternal weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth in hell. To wrestle with God in prayer, weeping and making supplication for the blessing, in time, is far easier than to lie under the curse through all eternity. Mortification of the most beloved lust, is a light thing, in comparison with the second death in hell. Lastly, Weigh your convictions in this balance. O how heavy do these lie upon many, till they get them shaken off! They are not disposed to continue under them, but strive to get clear of them, as of a mighty burden. But the worm of an ill conscience will neither die nor fleep in hell, though a man may now lull it afleep for a time. And certainly it is easier to entertain the sharpest convictions in this life, so as they lead us to Christ, than to have them fixed for ever in the conscience, and to be in hell totally and finally separated from him.

Secondly, But on the other hand, (1.) Weigh fin in this balance; and, though now it feems but a light thing to you, you will find it a weight sufficient to turn up eternal weight of wrath upon you. Even idle words, vain thoughts, and unprofitable actions, weighed in this balance, and confidered as following the finner into eternity, will each of them be heavier than the fand of the fea: Time idly spent, will make a weary eternity. Now is your feed-time; thoughts, words, and actions, are the feed fown; eternity is the harvest; though the feed now lies under the clod, unregarded by most men, every the least grain shall spring up at length; and the fruit shall be according to the feed, Gal. vi. 8. For he that soweth to his flesh, Shall of the flesh reap corruption (i.e. dectruction); but be that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (2.) Weigh in this balance your time and opportunities of grace and falvation, and you will find them very weighty. Precious time, and seasons of grace, Sabbaths, communions, prayers, fermons, and the like, are by

many, now a-days, made light of: but the day is coming, when one of these will be reckoned more valuable than a thousand worlds, by those who now have the least value for them. When they are gone for ever, and the loss cannot be retrieved, those will see the

worth of them who will not now see it. Use III. and last, Be warned and stirred up to flee from the wrath to come. Mind eternity, and closely ply the work of your falvation. What are you doing, while you are not so doing? Is heaven a fable, or hell a mere scare-crow? Must we live eternally, and shall we be at no more pains to escape everlasting misery? Will faint wishes take the kingdom of heaven by force? Will fuch drowfy endeavours, as most men satisfy themfelves with, be accounted fleeing from the wrath to come? You who have already fled to Christ, up, and be doing: you have begun the work; go on, loiter not, but work out your falvation with fear and trembling, Philip. ii. 12. Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell, Mat. x. 28. Remember, you are not yet ascended into heaven: you are but in your middle state. The everlasting arms have drawn you out of the gulph of wrath you were plunged into, in your natural state; they are still underneath you, that you can never fall down into it again: nevertheless, you have not yet got up to the top of the rock; the deep below you is frightful; look at it, and hasten your afcent. You who are yet in your natural state, lift up your eyes, and take a view of the eternal state. Arise, ye profane persons, ye ignorant ones, ye formal hypocrites, strangers to the power of godliness, slee from the wrath to come. Let not the young venture to delay a moment longer, nor the old put off this work any more. To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; lest he swear in his wrath that you shall never enter into his rest. It is no time to linger in a state of sin, as in Sodom; when fire and brimstone are coming down on it from the Lord. Take warning in time: they who are in hell are not troubled with fuch warnings; but are enraged against themselves, because they slighted the warning when they had it.

Consider, I pray you, (1.) How uneasy it is to lie one whole night on a foft bed, in perfect health, when we very fain would have fleep, but cannot get it, fleep being departed from us. How often should we, in that case, wish for rest! How full of tossings to and fro! But ah! how dreadful must it then be, to lie in forrow, wrapped up in scorching flames through eternity, in that place where they have no rest day nor night! (2.) How terrible would it be, to live under violent pains of the cholic or gravel, for forty or fixty years together, without any intermission! yet that is but a very small thing in comparison of eternal separation from God, the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched. (3.) Eternity is an awful thought! O long, long, endless eternity! but will not every moment, in eternity of woe feem a month, and every hour a year, in that most wretched and desperate condition? Hence, ever and ever, as it were a double eternity. The fick man in the night, toffing to and fro on his bed, fays, It will never be day; complains, that his pain ever continues, never, never abates. Are these petty time-eternities, which men form to themselves, in their own imaginations, so very grievous? Alas! then how grievous, how utterly insupportable must a real eternity of woe, and all manner of miseries be! Lastly, There will be space enough there, to reslect on all the ills of one's heart and life, which one cannot get time to think of now; and to fee that all that was faid of the impenitent finner's hazard was true, and that the half, was not told. There will be space enough in eternity, to carry on delayed repentance, to rue one's follies, when it is too late; and in a state past remedy, to speak forth these fruitless wishes; "O that I never had been born! that the womb had been my grave, and I had never feen the fun! O that I had taken warning in time, and fled from this wrath, while the door of mercy was standing open to me! O that I had never heard the gospel! that I had lived in some corner of the world, where a Saviour and the great falvation were not once named!" But all in vain. What is done cannot be undone; the opportunity is

lost, and cannot be retrieved; time is gone, and cannot be re-called. Wherefore improve time, while you have it, and do not wilfully ruin yourselves, by stop-

ping your ear to the gospel-call.

And now, if you would be faved from the wrath to come, and never go into this place of torment, take no rest in your natural state; believe the sinfulness and misery of it, and labour to get out quickly, fleeing unto Jesus Christ by faith. Sin in you is the seed of hell: and, if the guilt and reigning power of it be not removed intime, they will bring you to the fecond death in eternity. There is no way to get them removed, but by receiving of Christ, as he is offered in the gospel, for justification and fanctification: and he is now offered to you, with all falvation, Rev. xxii. 12. 17. Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be. And the Spirit and the Bride fay, Come; and let him that heareth, say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Jesus Christ is the Mediator of peace, and the fountain of holiness: he it is who delivereth us from the wrath to come. There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the sless, but after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1. And the terrors of hell, as well as the joys of heaven, are fet before you, to stir you up to cordial receiving of him, with all his falvation; and to incline you to the way of faith and holiness: in which alone you can escape the everlasting fire. May the Lord himself make them effectual to that end.

Thus far of man's eternal state; which, because it is

eternal, admits no fucceeding one for ever.

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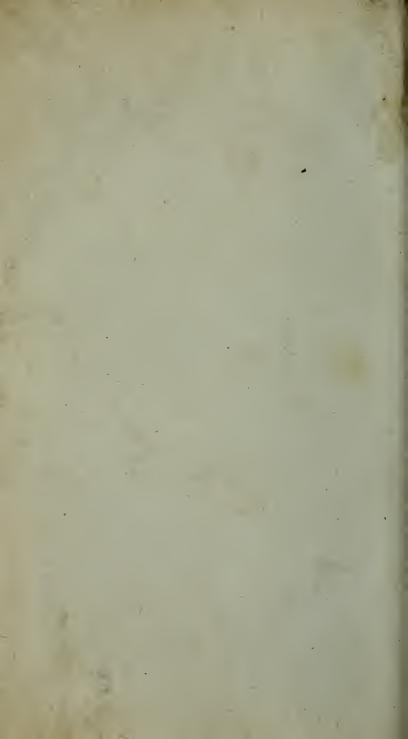
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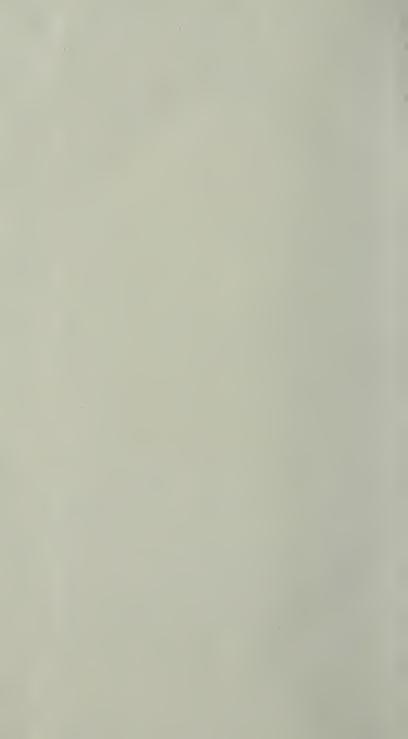
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